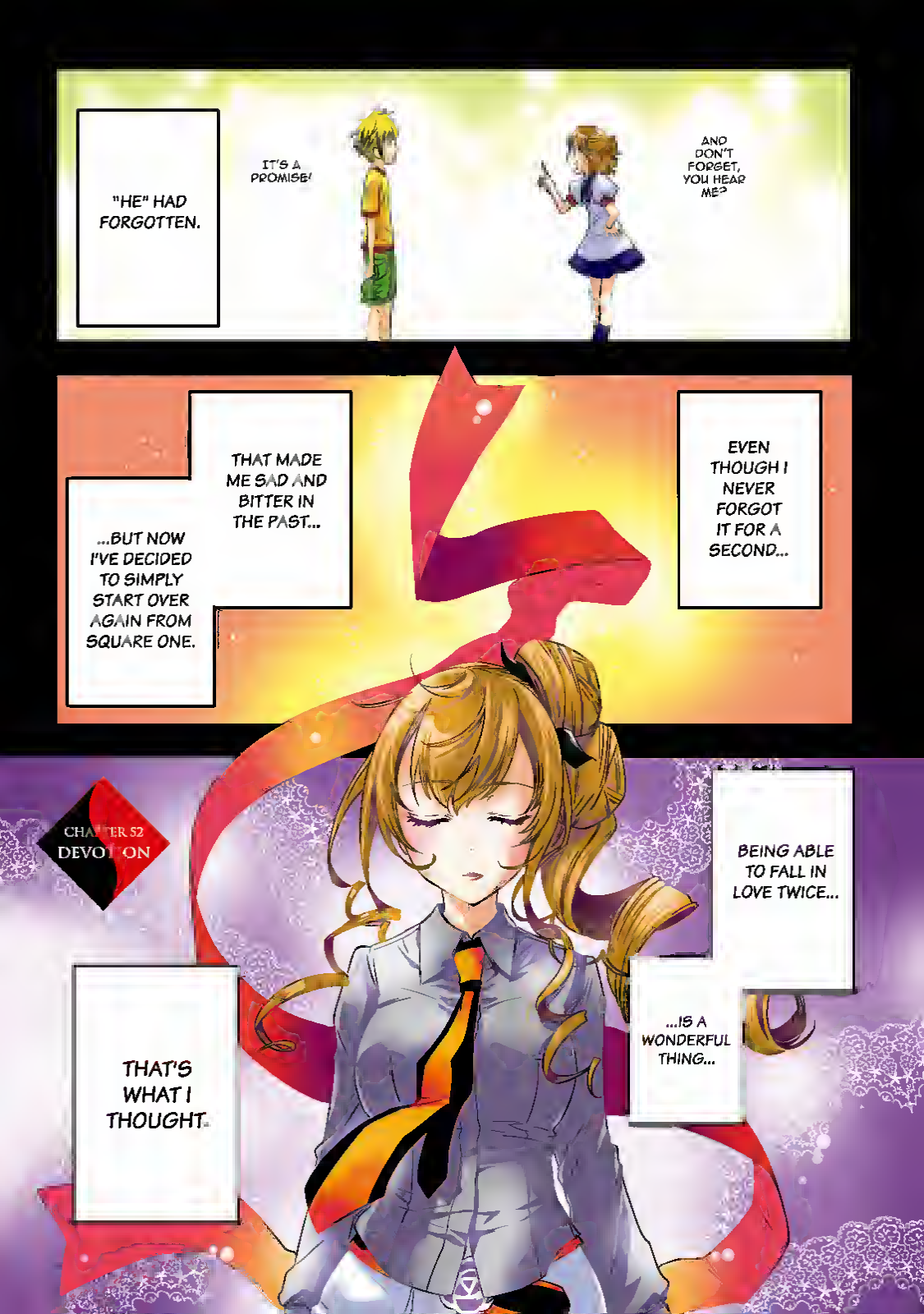
TOKYO
RAVENS
11
STORY BY
KOUHEI AZANO
ART BY
ATSUSHI SUZUMI
CHARACTER DESIGN BY
SUMIHEI


"HE" HAD FORGOTTEN.
IT'S A PROMISE!
AND DON'T FORGET, YOU HEAR ME?
EVEN THOUGH I NEVER FORGOT IT FOR A SECOND...
THAT MADE ME SAD AND BITTER IN THE PAST...
...BUT NOW I'VE DECIDED TO SIMPLY START OVER AGAIN FROM SQUARE ONE.
CHAPTER 52
DEVOTION
BEING ABLE TO FALL IN LOVE TWICE...
...IS A WONDERFUL THING...
THAT'S WHAT I THOUGHT.

TOKYO RAVENS

STORY: KOHEI AZANO ART: ATSUSHI SUZUMI CHARACTER DESIGN: SUMIHEI

CHAPTER 52
DEVOTION

CHAPTER 52
DEVOTION

TOKYO RAVENS

STORY: KOHEI AZANO ART: ATSUSHI SUZUMI CHARACTER DESIGN: SUMIHEI

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IT WAS THE FIRST TIME IN MY LIFE...
...I HAD EVER TRIED SO DESPERATELY...
...TO UNDERSTAND SOMETHING.
I DIDN'T SHIFT MY FOCUS FOR EVEN A SECOND.
WITH EACH AND EVERY ONE OF MY SENSES AT FULL BLAST, I TRIED TO ABSORB EVERYTHING I COULD.
BUT...
...EVEN THOUGH I TRIED TO CARVE WHAT WAS HAPPENING INTO MY ENTIRE BODY AND SOUL...
...WHEN I TRY TO REMEMBER WHAT HAPPENED...
...I CAN'T GRASP ITS VITAL DETAILS.
IT'S SO TANTALIZING IT TICKS ME OFF.

IT'S JUST NOT ENOUGH.
IT ISN'T EVEN A MATTER OF MY MEMORY.
THERE ARE PARTS I DIDN'T EVEN SENSE IN THE FIRST PLACE.
HOW CAN I RECREATE WHAT I SAW?
CAN I APPROACH THE HEIGHTS THAT I SAW THAT DAY?
WHAT IN THE HECK...
...IS MAGIC ANYWAY?
WHA?!
H-HARU-TORA?
HARUTORA!

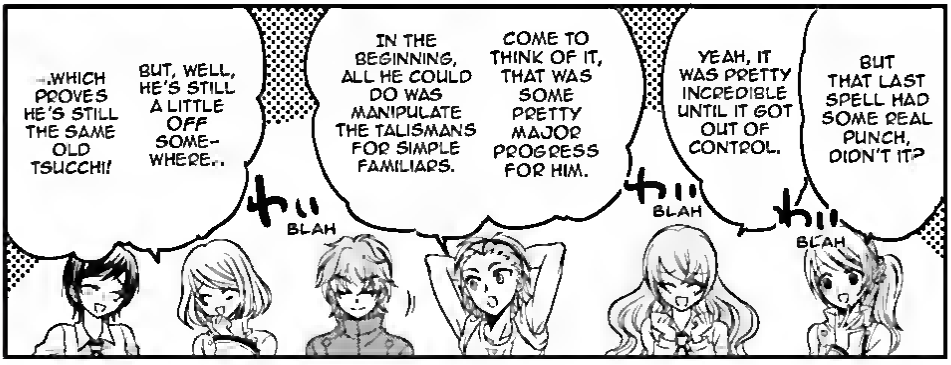
KREEK
KRRK
WHUMPH
WHUMPH WHUMPH
YIKES!
GASP
SHWIP
STOP
OH CRAP! I MADE 'EM TOO BIG!
FWAP
Phew...
THAT WAS A CLOSE ONE.
WHAT'S THE MATTER, TSUCHI-MIKADO?
YOU WERE DOING GREAT AT THE START...

IT'S JUST LIKE DRIVING A CAR.
YOU ARE PERFORMING AN ACTION THAT COULD INJURE SOMEONE. PLEASE KEEP THAT IN MIND.

OH! UH!
UM!
YOU GOT DISTRACTED, DIDN'T YOU?
YOU CAN'T DO THAT. LETTING YOUR MIND WANDER WHILE IN THE MIDDLE OF PERFORMING A SPELL IS INCREDIBLY DANGEROUS.

I KNOW. DON'T SCARE US LIKE THAT!
YEAH, GIVE US A BREAK, HARU-TORA!

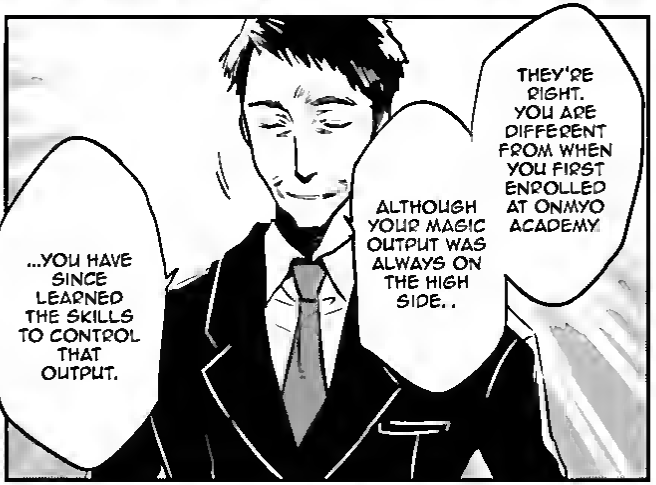
Y-YES, SIR.
I'M SORRY...

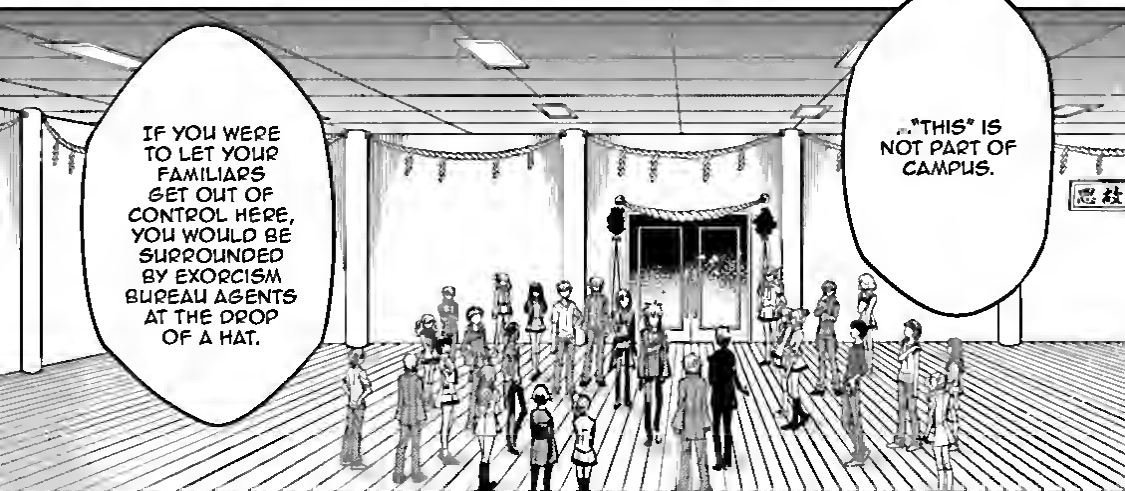

...WHICH PROVES HE'S STILL THE SAME OLD TSUCCHI!
BUT, WELL, HE'S STILL A LITTLE OFF SOME-WHERE..
IN THE BEGINNING, ALL HE COULD DO WAS MANIPULATE THE TALISMANS FOR SIMPLE FAMILIARS.
COME TO THINK OF IT, THAT WAS SOME PRETTY MAJOR PROGRESS FOR HIM.
YEAH, IT WAS PRETTY INCREDIBLE UNTIL IT GOT OUT OF CONTROL.
BUT THAT LAST SPELL HAD SOME REAL PUNCH, DIDN'T IT?
BLAH
BLAH
BLAH

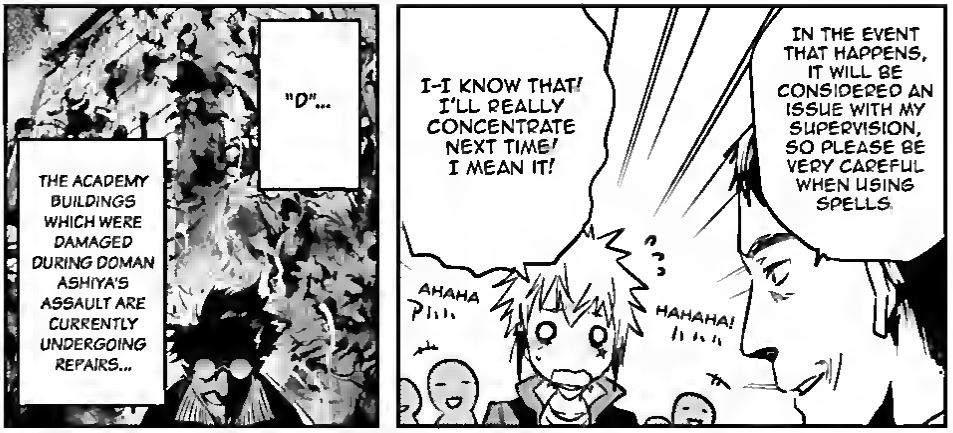
Sigh...
は
SHEESH.

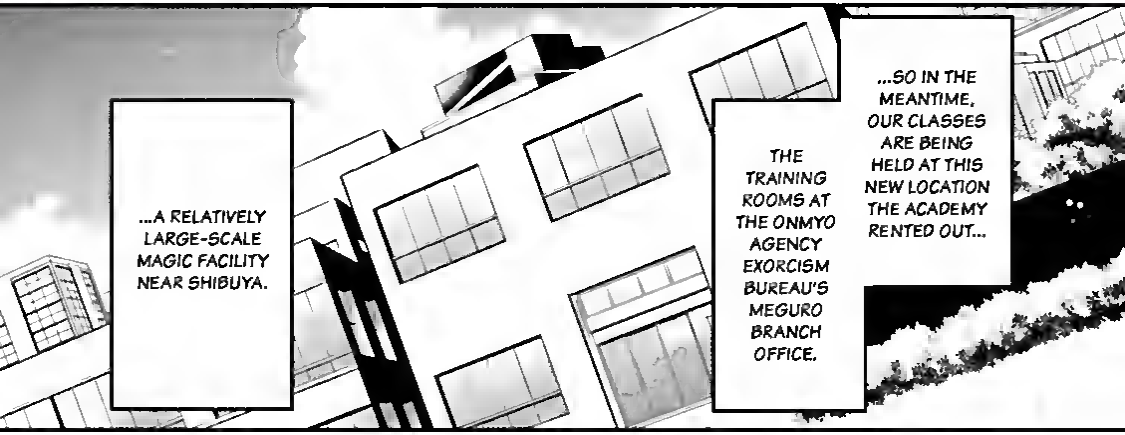
AH HA HA HA HA
あはははは
TSK! YEAH, YEAH. I KNOW I'M STRUGGLING TO CATCH UP TO YOU GENIUSES!

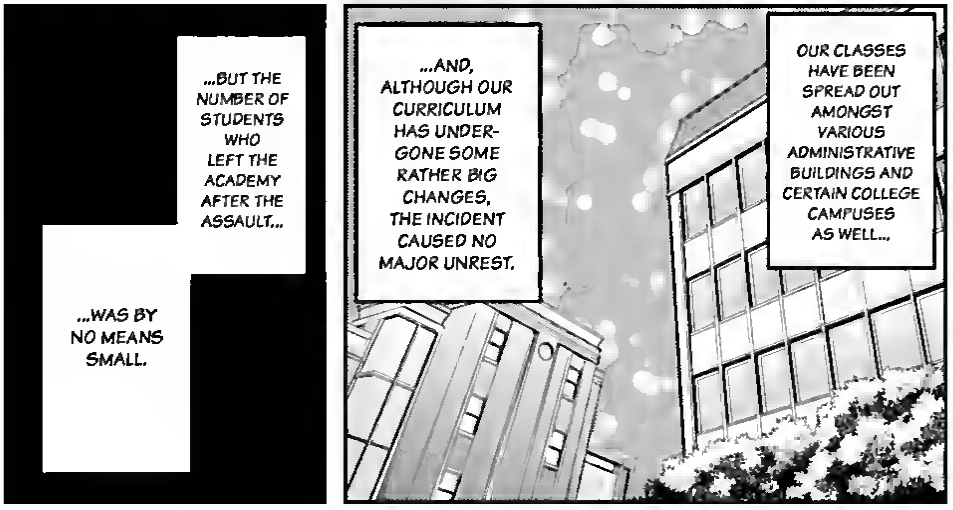
BUT...


...YOU HAVE SINCE LEARNED THE SKILLS TO CONTROL THAT OUTPUT.
ALTHOUGH YOUR MAGIC OUTPUT WAS ALWAYS ON THE HIGH SIDE..
THEY'RE RIGHT. YOU ARE DIFFERENT FROM WHEN YOU FIRST ENROLLED AT ONMYO ACADEMY.

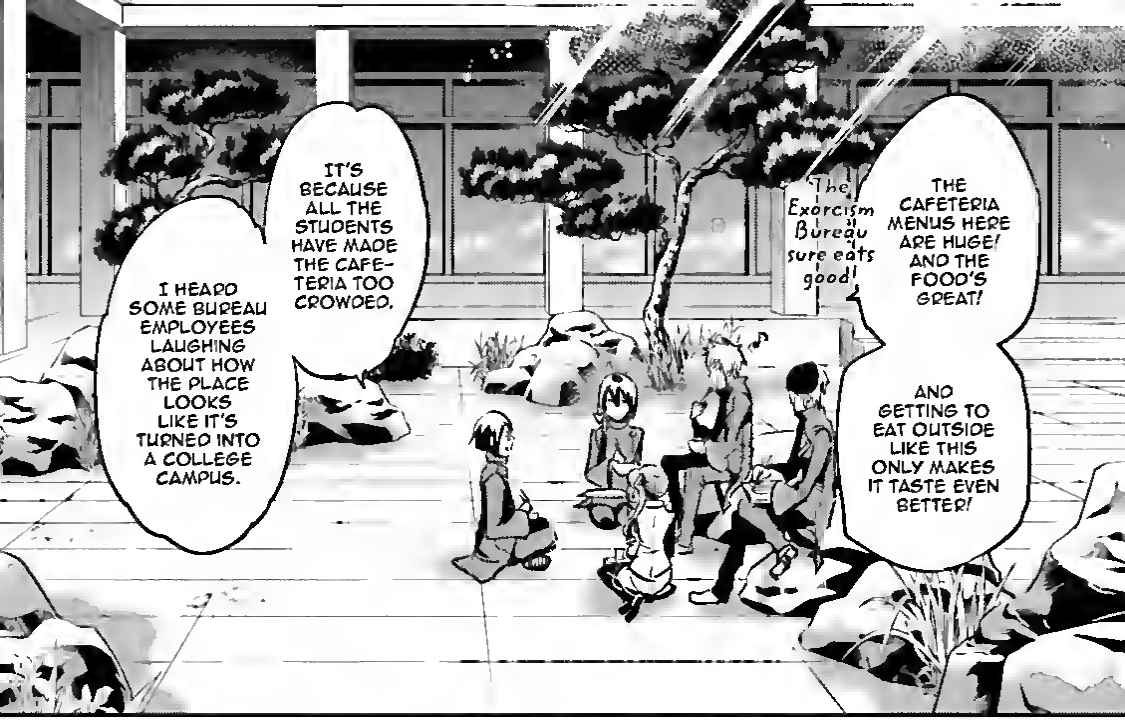

IF YOU WERE TO LET YOUR FAMILIARS GET OUT OF CONTROL HERE, YOU WOULD BE SURROUNDED BY EXORCISM BUREAU AGENTS AT THE DROP OF A HAT.
..."THIS" IS NOT PART OF CAMPUS.


"D"...
THE ACADEMY BUILDINGS WHICH WERE DAMAGED DURING DOMAN ASHIYA'S ASSAULT ARE CURRENTLY UNDERGOING REPAIRS...
I-I KNOW THAT! I'LL REALLY CONCENTRATE NEXT TIME! I MEAN IT!
IN THE EVENT THAT HAPPENS, IT WILL BE CONSIDERED AN ISSUE WITH MY SUPERVISION, SO PLEASE BE VERY CAREFUL WHEN USING SPELLS.
AHAHA
HAHAHA!


...A RELATIVELY LARGE-SCALE MAGIC FACILITY NEAR SHIBUYA.
THE TRAINING ROOMS AT THE ONMYO AGENCY EXORCISM BUREAU'S MEGURO BRANCH OFFICE.
...SO IN THE MEANTIME, OUR CLASSES ARE BEING HELD AT THIS NEW LOCATION THE ACADEMY RENTED OUT...

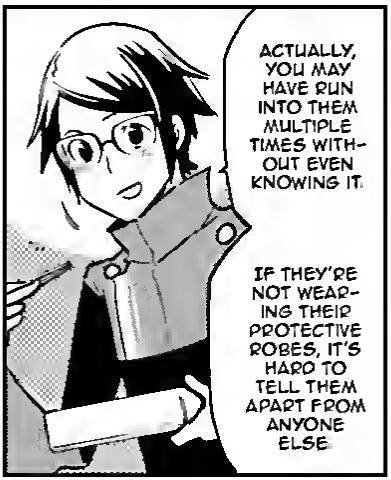

...BUT THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS WHO LEFT THE ACADEMY AFTER THE ASSAULT...
...WAS BY NO MEANS SMALL.
...AND, ALTHOUGH OUR CURRICULUM HAS UNDERGONE SOME RATHER BIG CHANGES, THE INCIDENT CAUSED NO MAJOR UNREST.
OUR CLASSES HAVE BEEN SPREAD OUT AMONGST VARIOUS ADMINISTRATIVE BUILDINGS AND CERTAIN COLLEGE CAMPUSES AS WELL...

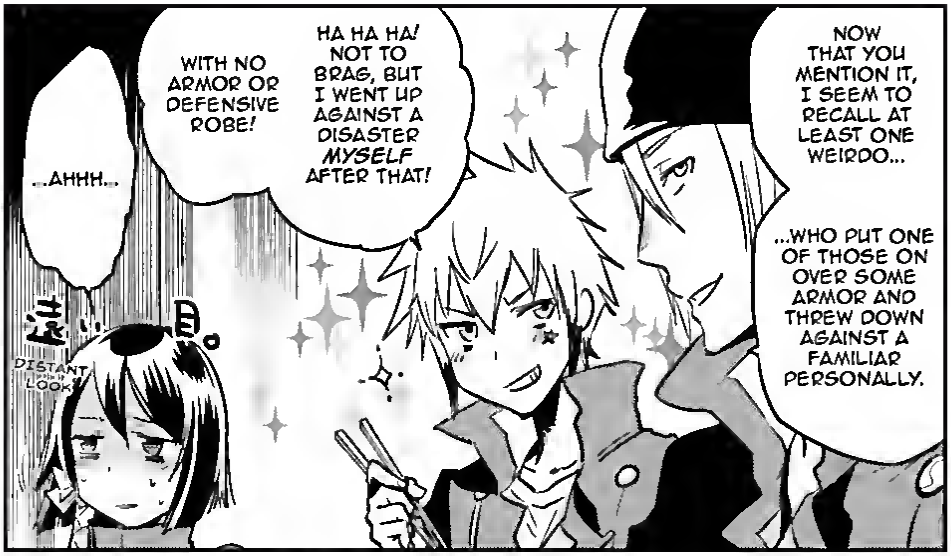
CLAP
NOW THEN!
IT WAS JUST THAT SHOCKING AN EVENT.
ESPECIALLY AMONG THE FRESHMEN, WHO HAD JUST ENROLLED..
THERE WERE NEARLY TEN DROPOUTS IN EVERY CLASS.
LET'S CONTINUE THE LESSON.
JUST BECAUSE WE CHANGED LOCATIONS, THAT DOESN'T MEAN THE SPELLS YOU WILL BE LEARNING HAVE CHANGED AS WELL.
明鏡
ALL RIGHT! IT'S FINALLY LUNCH!
LET'S EAT!

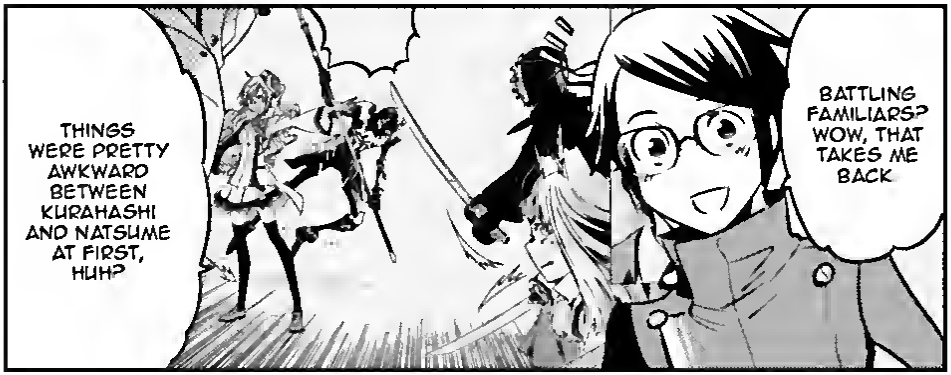

THE CAFETERIA MENUS HERE ARE HUGE! AND THE FOOD'S GREAT!
The Exorcism Bureau sure eats good!
AND GETTING TO EAT OUTSIDE LIKE THIS ONLY MAKES IT TASTE EVEN BETTER!
IT'S BECAUSE ALL THE STUDENTS HAVE MADE THE CAFETERIA TOO CROWDED.
I HEARD SOME BUREAU EMPLOYEES LAUGHING ABOUT HOW THE PLACE LOOKS LIKE IT'S TURNED INTO A COLLEGE CAMPUS.

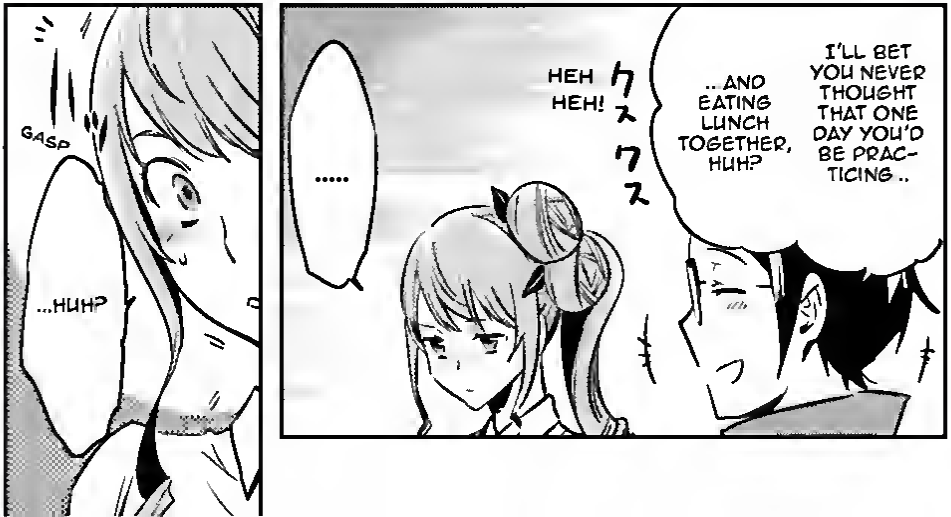
THIS IS A BRANCH OFFICE, SO SHOULDN'T THERE BE DOZENS OF THEM STATIONED HERE?
YOU KNOW, I HAVEN'T SEEN A WHOLE LOT OF EXORCISTS ...
GLANCE
GLANCE

OF COURSE NOT!
EXOR-CIST
THEY GENERALLY ONLY WEAR THEM WHEN PURGING SPIRITUAL DISASTERS
I THOUGHT THEY WORE *THOSE* ALL THE TIME..
Those.


ACTUALLY, YOU MAY HAVE RUN INTO THEM MULTIPLE TIMES WITHOUT EVEN KNOWING IT.
IF THEY'RE NOT WEARING THEIR PROTECTIVE ROBES, IT'S HARD TO TELL THEM APART FROM ANYONE ELSE.


NOW THAT YOU MENTION IT, I SEEM TO RECALL AT LEAST ONE WEIRDO...
...WHO PUT ONE OF THOSE ON OVER SOME ARMOR AND THREW DOWN AGAINST A FAMILIAR PERSONALLY.
HA HA HA! NOT TO BRAG, BUT I WENT UP AGAINST A DISASTER MYSELF AFTER THAT!
WITH NO ARMOR OR DEFENSIVE ROBE!
...AHHH...
DISTANT LOOK


BATTLING FAMILIARS? WOW, THAT TAKES ME BACK
THINGS WERE PRETTY AWKWARD BETWEEN KURAHASHI AND NATSUME AT FIRST, HUH?


I'LL BET YOU NEVER THOUGHT THAT ONE DAY YOU'D BE PRACTICING..
..AND EATING LUNCH TOGETHER, HUH?
HEH HEH! クスクス
.....
GASP
...HUH?

THAT REMINDS ME, KYOKO...
YOU'VE BEEN ACTIN' KIND OF STRANGE LATELY.
O-
OH! WITH NATSUME?
あわわ
Oh jeez!
TH-THAT'S RIGHT.
I WAS KIND OF GOING THROUGH A LOT BACK THEN...
YEAH
?
?
GLANCE
チラッ
.....
YOU SEEM KIND OF OUT OF IT...
YOU'RE RIGHT. ARE YOU FEELING WELL, KURA-HASHI?
I-IT'S NOTHING OF THE SORT!
AND I THINK YOU'RE THE ONE WHO'S OUT OF IT, HARU-TORA!
JUST NOW IN CLASS, FOR IN-STANCE!
UGH!
I KNOW! YOU'VE GOTTA GET SERIOUS!

DON'T TELL ME YOU'RE GETTING SLOPPY JUST BECAUSE YOU'RE GETTING USED TO CONTROLLING GENERAL-USE FAMILIARS?
O-OF COURSE NOT! DON'T BE SILLY!
THINKING ABOUT SOMETHING ELSE IN THE MIDDLE OF A SPELL IS JUST TOO MUCH...
OR TO BE MORE PRECISE...
...HAVEN'T YOU BEEN RATHER DISTRACTED LATELY?
SOMETHING BOTHERING ME? HMM..
EARLIER...
THEN, IS BOTHERING YOU?
...WHILE I WAS CONTROLLING THE SIMPLE FAMILIAR, I COULDN'T HELP BUT WONDER...
HOW WOULD A *PROFESSIONAL* ONMYOJI CONTROL IT?
WHAT ABOUT A MAGIC INVESTIGATOR?
AN EXORCIST?
ONE OF THE TWELVE DIVINE GENERALS?

...WHAT ABOUT THOSE TWO?
AND...
YEAH, THEY'RE RIGHT... THIS ISN'T LIKE ME.
AND IT ISN'T JUST THIS ONCE—IT'S BEEN HAPPENING A LOT LATELY.
SO, BEFORE I REALIZED IT, I HAD LOST CONTROL OF MY SIMPLE FAMILIAR.
THAT'S ALL I CAN THINK ABOUT...
I MEAN, AFTER SEEING *THAT*, HOW COULD WE NOT?
DON'T WE ALL HAVE SOMETHING ON OUR MIND TO SOME EXTENT?
IT'S NOT JUST HARUTORA THOUGH.
BUT HOW CAN I EXPLAIN THIS IRRITATION...
...TO EVERYONE?

IT WAS PRETTY SHOCKING, WASN'T IT?
...YEAH, I KNOW.
IT GAVE ME A LOT TO THINK ABOUT.
...YEAH, YOU'RE RIGHT.
Uh
SILENCE
.....
AND MR. OTOMO'S BEEN IN THE HOSPITAL...
...LONGER THAN WE EXPECTED.
OH, BUT...
ACCORDING TO MY GRANDMOTHER, HE HAS MADE A LOT OF PROGRESS TOWARDS RECOVERY.
IN FACT, SHE SAYS HE'S BICKERING WITH HER ABOUT WHETHER OR NOT HE'S GOING TO GET WORKER'S COMP...
Heh!
THAT DOES SOUND LIKE MR. OTOMO
BUT...
I THINK THE PRINCIPAL STILL HAS A LEG UP ON HIM WHEN IT COMES TO THAT SORT OF NEGOTIATION.
I KNEW HE WAS A MYSTERIOUS PERSON FROM THE VERY BEGINNING, BUT...
...I NEVER IMAGINED HE WAS SUCH A SKILLED MAGICIAN.
SO..

PHEW, IF ALL THE REGULAR MAGICAL INVESTIGATORS ARE LIKE *THAT*, THEN THE ONMYO AGENCY IS ONE SAFE PLACE
GRANDMOTHER WOULDN'T TELL ME ANYTHING ABOUT HIM EXCEPT THAT HE WAS A FORMER MAGICAL INVESTIGATOR...
WHAT THE HECK *IS* HE ANYWAY?

I WAS WONDER-ING THE SAME THING.
DOES HE OWE PRINCIPAL KURAHASHI SOMETHING?
SO WHY IS HE HERE TEACHING CLASSES?
THEY SAY HE RETIRED WHEN HE INJURED HIS RIGHT LEG...
BUT IF HE'S THAT SKILLED, IT SHOULDN'T HAVE MADE ANY DIFFERENCE...

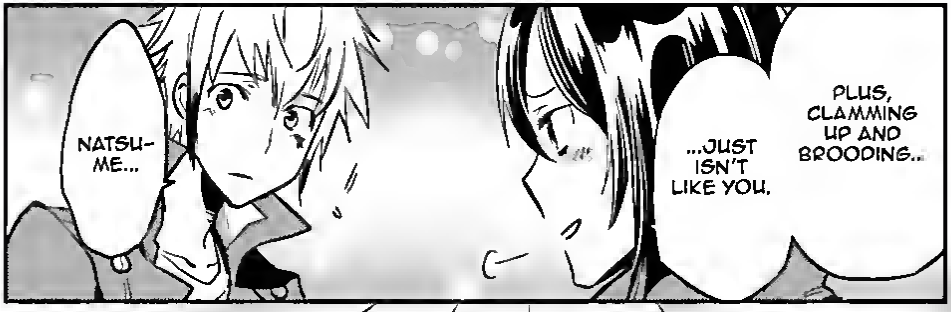
NO...
THAT ISN'T WHAT SO WAS SHOCKING TO ME.
...?

YEAH... I KNOW I SHOULDN'T SAY THIS, BUT...
THAT THEORY'S MORE CONVINCING TO ME TOO.
I'D SOONER BELIEVE SHE'S BLACK-MAILING HIM THAN THAT.

I WASN'T SHOCKED BY MR. OTOMO'S HIDDEN SKILL...
...BUT BY THE VERY "SPELLS" HE AND DOMAN ASHIYA USED.
IS IT JUST ME?
H-HEY, TENMA...
DON'T YOU THINK MR. OTOMO'S SPELLS... WERE A LITTLE DIFFERENT FROM THE ONES WE USE?
OF COURSE THEY WERE! HE USED A BUNCH OF SPELLS WE DON'T EVEN KNOW!
MOST OF THEM WEREN'T EVEN GENERAL MAGIC.
AND THERE WAS A HUGE GAP BETWEEN THEM AND US ON JUST A TECHNICAL LEVEL...
NO, THAT'S NOT WHAT I MEANT...
IT WAS SOMETHING EVEN MORE BASIC THAN THAT. LIKE, UH...
~~~~
.....
MAYBE I AM JUST...
...A LITTLE OFF?
?
OR MAYBE...
~~~~

I'M JUST THE ONLY ONE WHO DOESN'T "GET" IT...
...HARU-TORA?
.....
HARU-TORA!
HUH?
OH, SORRY.
WELL...
I DON'T THINK IT'S GOOD TO DWELL ON IT TOO LONG, OKAY?
TO BE FRANK, THAT MAGIC BATTLE WAS ON AN ENTIRELY DIFFERENT LEVEL.
WORRYING ABOUT THAT LEVEL OF MAGIC WHEN YOU'RE NOT READY ISN'T GOING TO GET YOU ANYWHERE.
JUST DO WHAT YOU CAN FOR NOW.

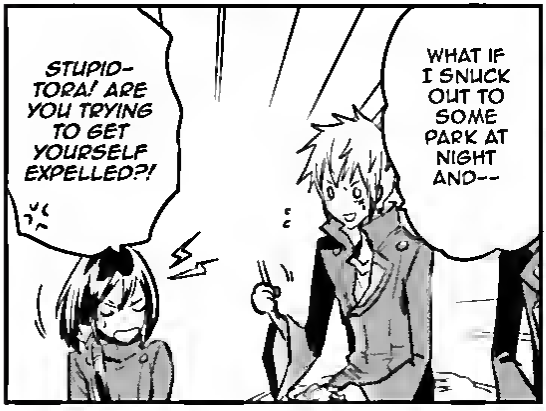
YOU'RE MAKING PROGRESS TOO, HARUTORA.
YOU MAY HAVE MADE SOME DANGEROUS MISTAKES BACK THERE...
...BUT THE SIMPLE FAMILIARS THEMSELVES WERE MUCH BETTER THAN THE ONES YOU'VE MADE IN THE PAST.

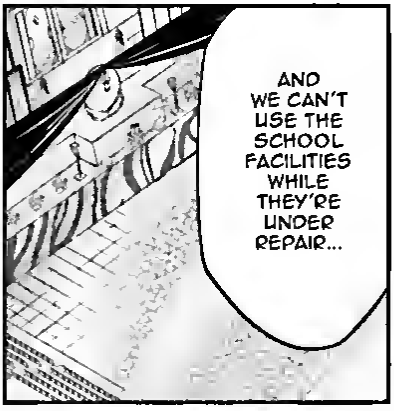

PLUS, CLAMMING UP AND BROODING...
...JUST ISN'T LIKE YOU.
NATSU-ME...

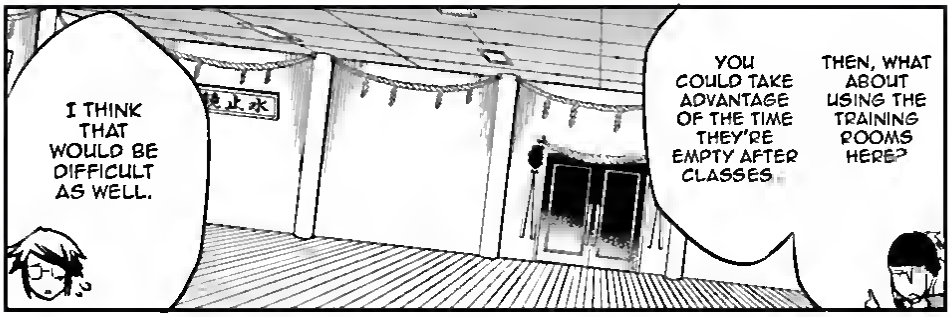
NO...
IT ISN'T A LOSS OF CONFIDENCE EITHER.
IT'S MORE LIKE I'M TOTALLY ABSORBED BY THESE SPELLS THAT ARE WAY OUT OF MY LEAGUE...
BUT...

WELL...
...I DON'T KNOW HOW TO EXPRESS THAT...
...AND I'M HONESTLY HAPPY NATSUME'S WORRIED ABOUT ME.
YEAH, YOU'RE RIGHT.
SMILE

HE HASN'T BEEN ABLE TO DO ANY INDEPENDENT TRAINING SINCE THE ATTACK...
...SO I'M SURE HARUTORA'S PENT UP IN A LOT OF WAYS.
IT IS PRETTY HARD TO WORK OUT YOUR FRUSTRATIONS IN THE MIDDLE OF CLASS AFTER ALL.
YEAH, YOU'RE RIGHT ABOUT THAT.
IT'S LIKE...
...I REALLY WANT TO TRY OUT SOME STUFF.


WHAT IF I SNUCK OUT TO SOME PARK AT NIGHT AND--
STUPID-TORA! ARE YOU TRYING TO GET YOURSELF EXPELLED?!


AND WE CAN'T USE THE SCHOOL FACILITIES WHILE THEY'RE UNDER REPAIR...


THEN, WHAT ABOUT USING THE TRAINING ROOMS HERE?
YOU COULD TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE TIME THEY'RE EMPTY AFTER CLASSES.
I THINK THAT WOULD BE DIFFICULT AS WELL.

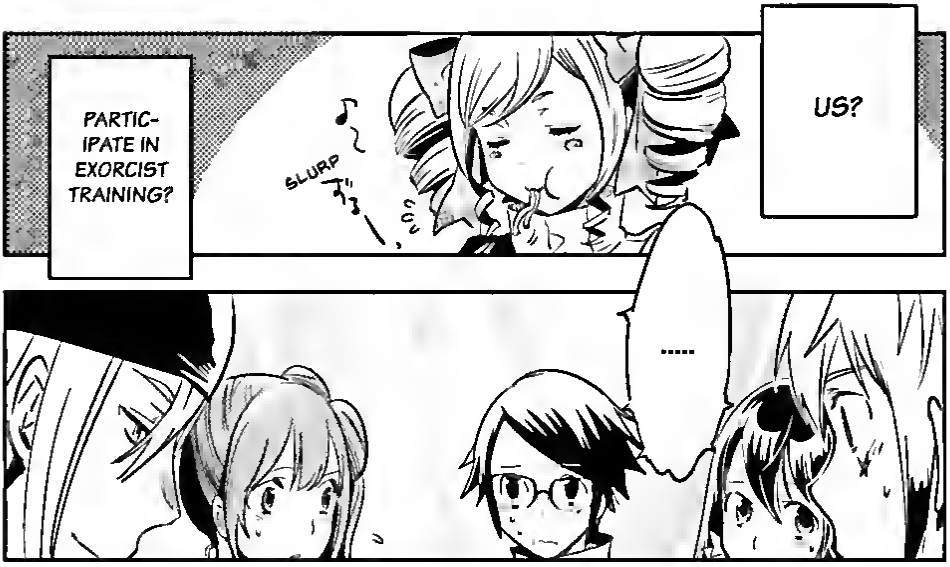
I THINK DIVIDING THEM UP FOR OUR CLASSES DURING THE DAY IS HAVING ENOUGH OF AN EFFECT ON THE AGENCY'S BUSINESS.
AND DOESN'T THE EXORCISM BUREAU REALLY GET BUSY AT NIGHT?
MOST SPIRITUAL DISASTERS APPEAR THEN...

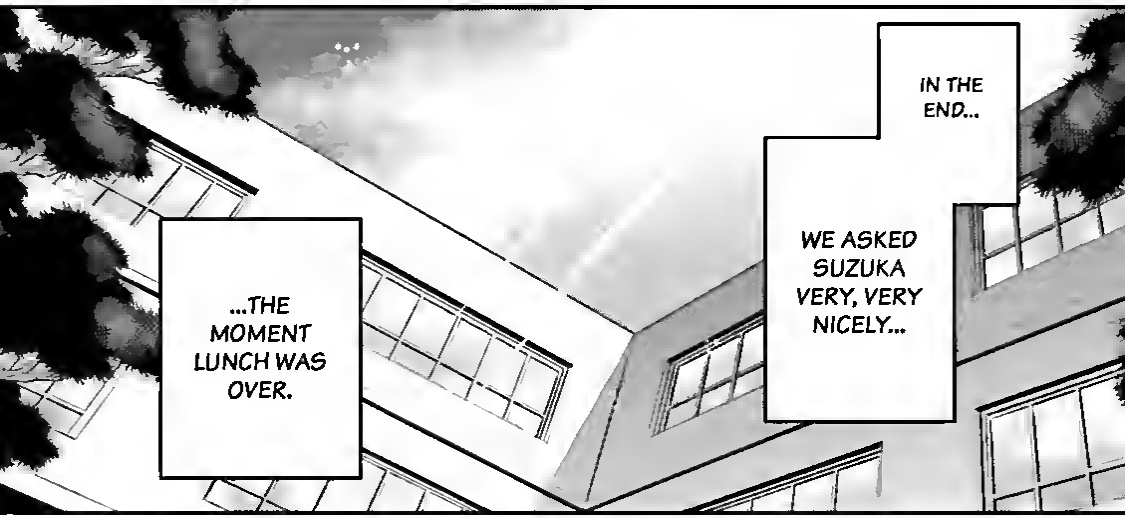
BUT ISN'T THE MAIN JOB OF EXORCISTS WAITING AROUND?
CAN'T HE JUST JOIN IN ON THE TRAINING THEY DO DURING ALL THAT DOWN-TIME?
BLUNTLY
TH-THAT'S CRAZY TALK!
WE'RE TALKING ABOUT PROFESSIONAL EXORCIST TRAINING HERE!
THERE'S NO WAY STUDENTS LIKE US COULD KEEP UP! PLUS, THINK OF ALL THE TROUBLE IT WOULD CAUSE--
SO WHAT? SOUNDS GOOD TO ME.

!
TIP-TOE
OH, THAT YOU, SUZUKA?
I THOUGHT YOUR CLASSES WERE IN SHIBUYA TODAY.
CHILLED CHINESE NOODLES
KLENK
TIP TOE
TIP TOE
SPLASH
ALL THIS GOING BACK AND FORTH IS A REAL PAIN IN THE BUTT...
AFTER-NOON CLASS-ES ARE HERE.
TIP TOE TIP TOE
WHAT ELSE WOULD I BE TALKING ABOUT? IT'S JUST TRAINING, AFTER ALL...
DAIRENJI...
WHEN YOU SAID SOMETHING SOUNDED GOOD TO YOU, DID YOU MEAN MY PLAN?

KLONK
WHOA?!
...!
...I SUPPOSE THAT'S STILL PLENTY INTIMIDATING TO YOU LOSERS.
BUT...
HEHEH!
PLOP
YEESH!
SO...
PFFT...
HEY, ARE YOU OKAY?
I-I JUST STUMBLED A LITTLE!
HURRY UP AND MOVE OVER!
HOW'M I SUPPOSED TO SIT WITH YOU IN THE WAY?!
BLUSH
NOW, NOW.
DIDN'T I JUST SAY THAT?! ARE YOU SCREWING WITH ME, PUNK?!
Yargh!!
DAI-RENJI...
WERE YOU TALKING ABOUT MY PLAN JUST NOW?

YOU GET ME?
...THAT IS, IF IT'S JUST A BUNCH OF "STUDENTS."
A BUNCH OF STUDENTS LIKE YOU EVEN THINKING THEY HAVE A SHOT IS JUST RIDICU-LOUS!
OF COURSE NOT, YOU MORON!
DO YOU EVEN KNOW WHAT THEIR TRAINING IS LIKE?
IS IT REALLY SOMETHING THAT WOULD BE OKAY FOR US TO PARTICIPATE IN?
DON'T YOU THINK THINGS WOULD BE A LITTLE DIFFERENT THEN?
GRIN
BUT WHAT IF IT WAS A PROPOSAL FROM ONE OF THE "TWELVE DIVINE GENERALS"?
SO HOW ABOUT IT?
YOU KNOW, ME...
...THE PRODIGY FROM THE TWELVE DIVINE GENERALS?
IF YOU ASK VERY, VERY NICELY...
...I WOULDN'T MIND ASKING FOR YOU.


PARTIC-IPATE IN EXORCIST TRAINING?
SLURP
US?
.....

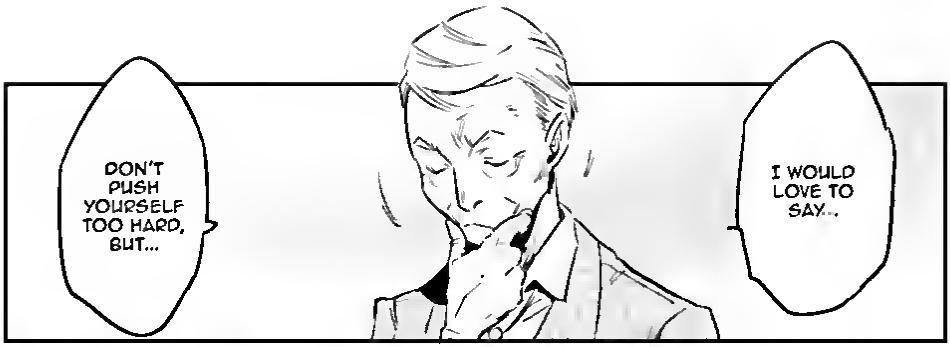

...THE MOMENT LUNCH WAS OVER.
IN THE END...
WE ASKED SUZUKA VERY, VERY NICELY...

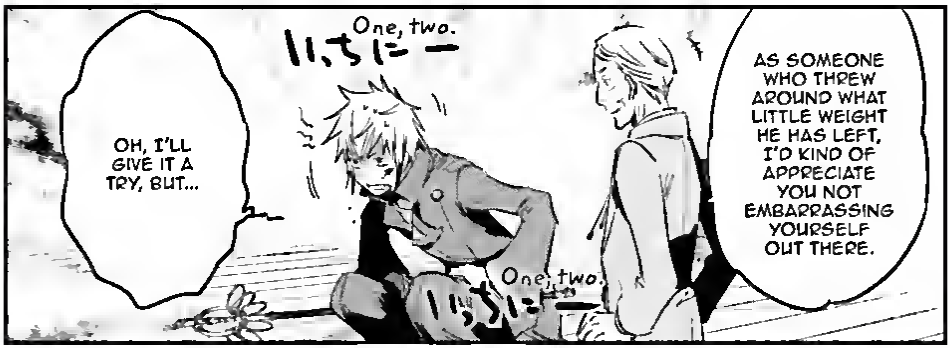
NOD
YOU SHOULD BE FINE NOW.
...I HAVE TEMPORARILY REMOVED THE SPELL.

BUT THIS SPELL PUTS A LARGE BURDEN ON THE TARGET ANYWAY, AND IT HAS BEEN IN PLACE FOR OVER TWO YEARS NOW.
EVEN FOR YOU, KEEPING IT ACTIVE FOR MUCH LONGER WILL BE DANGEROUS.
ANY IRREGULARITIES IN HER SPIRITUAL PRESENCE SHOULD CORRECT THEMSELVES OVERNIGHT.
I'M SORRY FOR ALL THE TROUBLE.
NOW, NOW. THERE'S NO REASON TO RUSH.
WE ARE QUITE BUSY AT THE MOMENT.
IT WOULD BE DANGEROUS TO STRETCH OURSELVES TOO THIN.
THE ALTAR WILL BE EASY TO USE NOW.
WE THINK IT WOULD BE IN EVERYONE'S BEST INTEREST TO ACT QUICKLY.
AND ABOUT THE CONTRACT...
HALF THOSE CURRENTLY INVOLVED HAVE ALREADY BEEN LOST.
STILL, WE SHOULD MOVE FORWARD WITH THE PREPARATIONS

...I UNDERSTAND.
SORRY...
...BUT OUR TRAINING IS PART OF OUR OFFICIAL DUTIES.
PARTICIPATION BY STUDENTS AND PROFESSIONAL ONMYOJI, EVEN IF THEY ARE FIRST-CLASS STATE ONMYOJI...
...IS STRICTLY FORBIDDEN
MEGURO BRANCH OFFICE SPIRITUAL DISASTER PURIFICATION DIVISION SQUAD 13 CAPTAIN ETOU
UM...
TWITCH
...BUT...
...I AM TECHNICALLY ONE OF THOSE FIRST-CLASS STATE ONMYOJI...
TWITCH
OH, DON'T BE LIKE THAT, ETOU.

THIS TIME, YOU COULD SAY IT IS ACTUALLY A PART OF YOUR DUTIES.
...MR. FUJIWARA.
EVEN AT YOUR REQUEST, SIR, WE CANNOT BREAK SQUAD RULES...
OH, HEAR ME OUT.
CONSIDERING YOUR DUTIES, IT WOULDN'T BE A BAD IDEA TO LEARN THE EXTENT OF THESE KIDS' ABILITIES.
I MEAN... THERE'S ALWAYS THE POSSIBILITY YOU MAY BE ASSIGNED THE MISSION OF PROTECTING THEM AT SOME POINT
...?
WHISPER
H-HE IS?


I WOULD LOVE TO SAY...
DON'T PUSH YOURSELF TOO HARD, BUT...

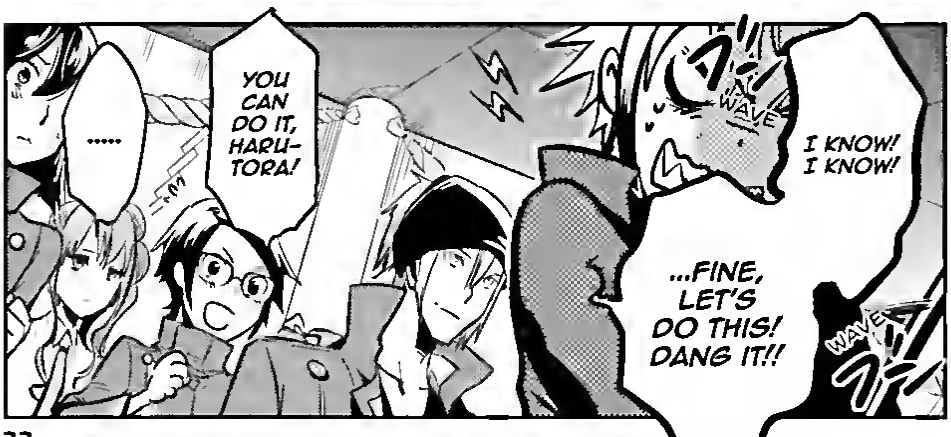

AS SOMEONE WHO THREW AROUND WHAT LITTLE WEIGHT HE HAS LEFT, I'D KIND OF APPRECIATE YOU NOT EMBARRASSING YOURSELF OUT THERE.
One, two.
いち、にー
OH, I'LL GIVE IT A TRY, BUT...
One, two.
いち、にー

I DIDN'T KNOW THE TRAINING INVOLVED...
...MOCK BATTLES BETWEEN EXORCISTS.
BOOM

AND THANKS TO A GAME OF ROCK-PAPER-SCISSORS, I'M GOING FIRST...
GLANCE
...AGAINST SQUAD CAPTAIN ETOU...
FWOOOOOOSH
PLUS, I BELIEVE YOU ARE THE BOY WHO HAD IT OUT WITH A MAGICAL INVESTIGATOR AND YAKO DEVOTEE ONLY THREE DAYS AFTER ENROLLING AT THE ACADEMY.
THERE'S NOTHING TO BE SCARED OF.
NO, NO, NO! IT'S NOT LIKE I WAS FIGHTING ALONE THAT DAY!
LOOK, THIS GUY IS A FORMER SUBORDINATE OF YOURS, ISN'T HE?
DO YOU HAVE ANY WORDS OF ADVICE?

AT ANY RATE, HE'S MUCH STRONGER THAN I AM NOW.
THAT WASN'T EVEN CLOSE TO ADVICE!!
YEESH, IT'S A GOOD THING I BROUGHT MY STAFF JUST IN CASE...
MUTTER MUTTER
DON'T GET SCARED NOW, HARUTORA.

YOU'VE FOUGHT A MAGICAL INVESTIGATOR, WEIRD ANIMALS. .
.. AND JUST THE OTHER DAY YOU FOUGHT DOMAN ASHIYA'S FAMILIARS.
YEAH, THAT'S RIGHT! AND WITH A CERTAIN HORNED SOMEONE TOO! DANG IT!
HARU-TORA!
CALM DOWN AND WATCH YOUR OPPO-NENT!
GO IN WITH THE MINDSET OF A SPORTS TEAM GOING AGAINST A STRONGER TEAM FOR THE EXPERI-ENCE
WAVE
WAVE


I KNOW! I KNOW!
...FINE, LET'S DO THIS! DANG IT!!
WAVE
WAVE
YOU CAN DO IT, HARU-TORA!
.....

THE OTHER MEMBERS OF THE SQUAD DRAGGED OUT A BENCH TO SPECTATE...
THEY APPARENTLY KNOW I'M FROM THE TSUCHIMIKADO CLAN.
.....
GO OUT THERE AND DO SOMETHING COOL.
HOORAY. YOU CAN DO IT, HARUTORA.
ALL TICKED OFF
CONCENTRATE, HARUTORA...
SIGH...
I WANT TO TEST MYSELF.
I WASN'T LYING ABOUT THOSE FEELINGS.
CONCENTRATE...
YEP, ALL I CAN DO IS ACT.
I'M DUMB, SO THINKING ABOUT IT ISN'T GOING TO DO ME ANY GOOD.

SINCE I ENTERED ONMYO ACADEMY, I'VE JUST BEEN STUMBLING MY WAY THROUGH EVERYTHING.
I COLLIDED ...
...FELL DOWN...
...GOT HURT...
I MUST MASTER...
...WHAT HAS ELUDED ME ALL THIS TIME.
ARE YOU READY?

YES, SIR!!
EVEN IF...
...IT'S ONLY A LITTLE AT A TIME...
END OF CHAPTER 52

CHAPTER 53
TRAINING
NOW, LET US BEGIN.

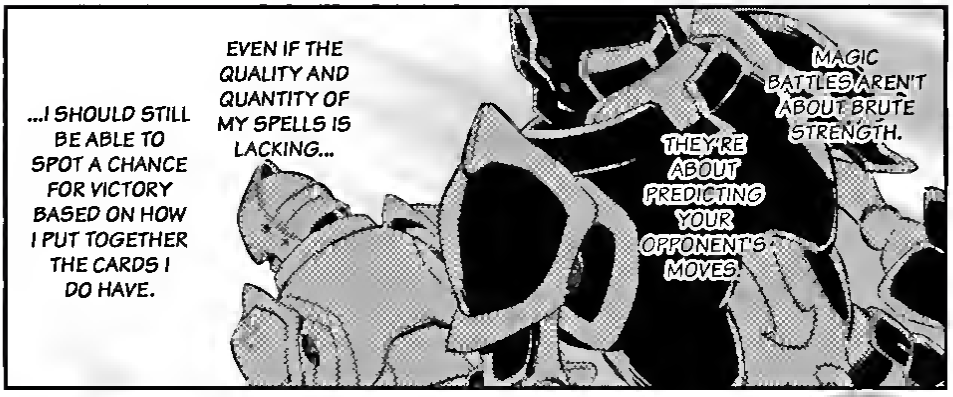
SHING
KON!
POOF
A DEFENSE FAMILIAR?
THIS SHOULD BE INTER-ESTING.
WOW.
WHOOSH

VIVIV
TMP
TMP
EEK?!
BAM
ZZZT
ZZZZZZT
TMP

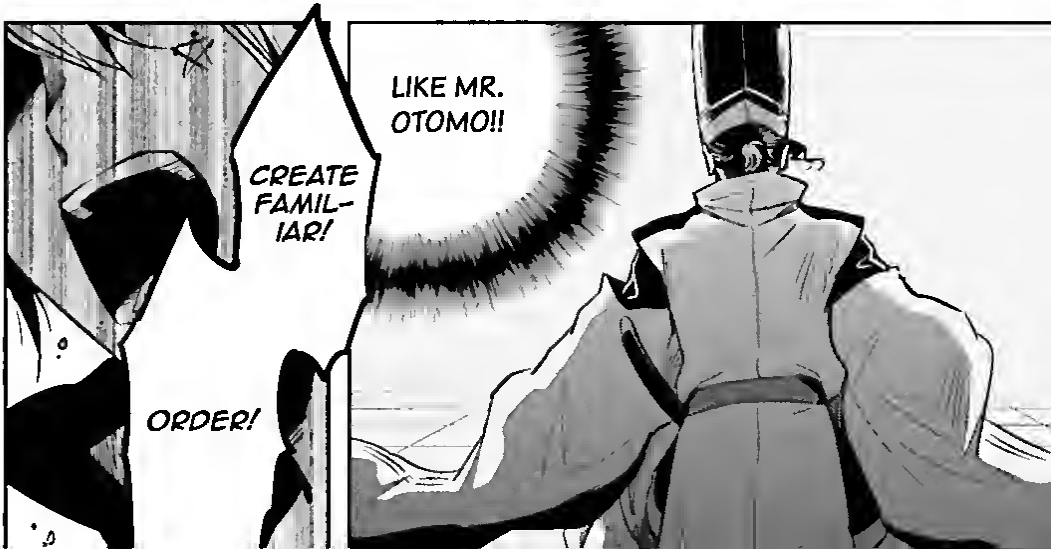
AMONG EXORCISTS, THESE ARE THE STANDARD ONMYO AGENCY-BUILT DEFENSE FAMILIARS.
"MODEL 61 GUARDIAN KINGS"..
SAME AS THE ONES THE PRINCIPAL USED THE OTHER DAY?
THUD
TMP
TMP
HSSSS
WHA?!
TMP
FWHP
THE MAGE IS CHARGING IN HIM-SELF?!
WHOOSH

RARGH!
CAPTAIN?!
IF YOU'RE NOT CAREFUL, YOU COULD SERIOUSLY HURT THE KID!
ALL RIGHT! THESE GUYS ARE SOFT!
THEY HOLD BACK AGAINST REGULAR HUMANS.
SHZ
SHZ

BWAHAHAHA!
THINK!
THINK!


...I SHOULD STILL BE ABLE TO SPOT A CHANCE FOR VICTORY BASED ON HOW I PUT TOGETHER THE CARDS I DO HAVE.
EVEN IF THE QUALITY AND QUANTITY OF MY SPELLS IS LACKING...
MAGIC BATTLES AREN'T ABOUT BRUTE STRENGTH.
THEY'RE ABOUT PREDICTING YOUR OPPONENT'S MOVES.

FIRST, I HAVE TO OBSERVE.
OBSERVE THE BATTLEFIELD AND MY OPPONENT.
AND MYSELF.
OBSERVE EVERYTHING OBJECTIVELY...
...AND CONTROL THE FIGHT.


CREATE FAMIL-IAR!
ORDER!
LIKE MR. OTOMO!!

FWUMPH
FWUMPH
FWUMPH
FWUMPH
WHOOSH
WHAM
WHUMP
WHICH WILL IT BE?
DEFEND YOURSELF...
...OR KEEP MANIPULATING YOUR KINGS?

FWIP
ORDER!
WHUMP
BOTH!
WHOOM
DIDN'T EVEN SHAKE HIM A LITTLE, EH?
GLANCE
FWOOSH
ZNT ZNT

MY TARGET IS THE MAGE...
...AND IT LOOKS LIKE HE HASN'T NOTICED MY TRAP...
NO, MAYBE HE HAS?
FWIP
NNNT
NNNG
I NEED A DIVERSION!
OW?!
KON! FIRE!
DAMN IT! I CAN'T GET A READ ON HIM!
TWITCH
FWOOM
FWOOM
FWOOM
FWOOM

WHAP
WHAP
BIND!
ORDER!
PAT
VREEN
WAS THAT TOO OBVIOUS?!
HE SAW THROUGH IT?!
SLAM
FWIP
SLIDE
SLIDE
SLIDE
SLIDE
IT'S NO USE! HE'S ALREADY PREPARED TO COUNTER IT!
NEXT!
WHOOSH
FWIP

ROLL
HOW CAN I BEAT HIM?
FIRST, OBSERVE--
ROLL
ZING
OW?!
THIS IS WHAT A PRO WHO'S WADED THROUGH COUNTLESS BATTLEFIELDS IS LIKE...
HE'S TOTALLY COOL AND COLLECTED.
THE METAL ELEMENT?

SO HIS AIM IS "METAL BEATS WOOD," EH?
THEN, IF I CAN SUPPRESS THAT...
WHUMP
WHUMP
CAN I MAKE IT?!
FWIP
...BACK AS A KID BEFORE I LEARNED I DIDN'T HAVE ANY TALENT FOR SPIRIT SEEING...
THE TALISMAN QUICKDRAW I USED TO PRACTICE...
...HAS BECOME AN INSEPARABLE PART OF ME.
ORDER!

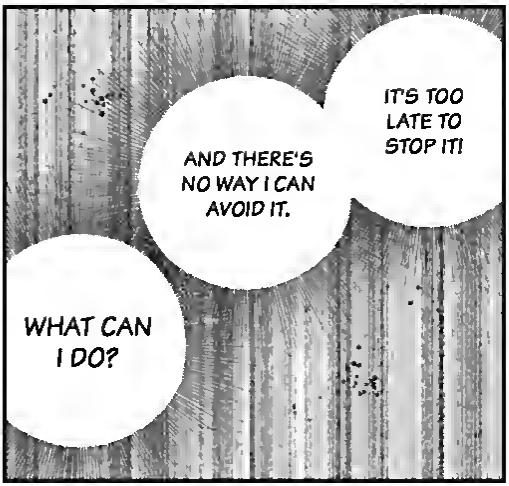
FIRE BEATS METAL!
!
FWAP
ZING
...?!
WHAT'S HIS NEXT MOVE?!
I HAVE TO FOCUS AND OBSERVE...
I CAN'T ANTICIPATE HIS NEXT MOVE?
GIVE CHASE? NO, THE CHANCE OF SUCCESS IS TOO LOW...
A CHANGE OF TARGET?

Dooo
!!!
ooo
!!
IS THAT A BARRIER?!
Shi...
HE DEPLOYED IT WITHOUT BINDING AND FIXING IT?
I'VE NEVER SEEN ANYONE USE A BARRIER LIKE THIS...
ooo
IF ONLY HE HADN'T TAKEN DOWN THE TALISMANS I SLIPPED INTO THE CROWS TOO...
ANYWAY, I'VE GOTTA MOVE ON TO MY NEXT PLAN!
FIRST, A WATER TALISMAN!
FOLLOWED BY A WOOD TALISMAN!
GO!

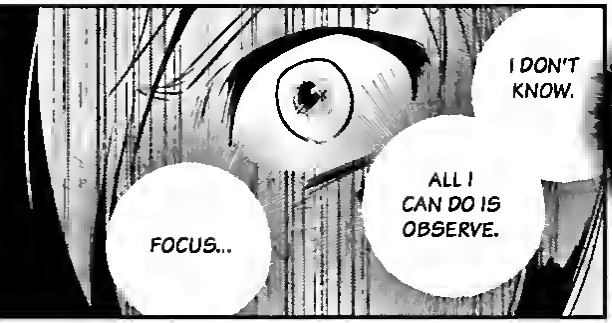
ORDER!
I'LL LET TWO TECHNIQUES RUN THROUGH MY HEAD...
...REFINE SPIRIT ENERGY AND CONVERT IT TO MAGIC...
...TO INCREASE THE QUALITY OF THE INDIVIDUAL SPELLS.

MY HEAD HURTS SO BAD IT FEELS LIKE IT'S GOING TO SPLIT...
WHAM
SPROUT
...IS BECAUSE I WAS SIMPLY BEING THAT SLOPPY WITH MY SPELLS?
WAS THE ONLY REASON I'VE BEEN ABLE TO FIRE THESE OFF WILDLY FOR SO LONG...
THE RELATIONSHIPS OF THE FIVE ELEMENTS...
WATER BEGETS WOOD!!
FWOOSH
WHAT'S THE CAPTAIN DOING?
...BUT IT SHOULD AT LEAST BUY ME SOME TIME.
GRAB
THIS IS FAR FROM A MATCH FOR MR. OTOMO'S...

HE'S FAST!
FWAP
HE'S CHANTING AN INCANTATION...
...PERFORMING THE DHARMA WHEEL GESTURES...
...AND FINALLY A SPELL-BINDING GESTURE.


IT'S TOO LATE TO STOP IT!
AND THERE'S NO WAY I CAN AVOID IT.
WHAT CAN I DO?

GASP
A PARALYSIS SPELL?!
OH CRAP!!


I DON'T KNOW.
ALL I CAN DO IS OBSERVE.
FOCUS...

FWOO
...OM...
OW?!
ZING
...BINDING SVAHA!
... BISHI BISHI KARA KARA...
OOO
HERE IT COMES!
KREK
OOSH
BA-DOOM
M-M-MASTER HARU-TORA?!

THUD
UNGH?!
I CAN JUST BARELY MANAGE A WRIGGLE.
I GUESS THE STAFF THREW UP A BARE MINIMUM BARRIER AT THE LAST SECOND...
CAN I RELEASE THE SPELL WITH THIS LITTLE WIGGLE ROOM?
HUFF
HUFF
DANG IT!
...I DON'T KNOW!
HUFF
IT DOESN'T LOOK LIKE THERE'S SO MUCH AS A SEAM FOR ME TO FORCE OPEN...
NO...
I JUST CAN'T SEE ONE.
HUFF
HUFF

...MR. OTOMO'S STAFF CREATED FOR ME.
I CAN'T TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE CHANCE...
HUFF
DAMN IT!!
DINK
GAME, SET...
...MATCH.

HUFF
HUFF
HUFF
.....
I LOSE.
...!!
WHOOM
ARGH
...AFTER ALL?
SO IT WAS...
...NO USE...
HUFF
AND MY OPPONENT HASN'T SO MUCH AS BROKEN A SWEAT.
HUFF
ALL RIGHT!
HOW PATHETIC ...
DANG IT!
M-M-MASTER HARU-TORA!
WHAP WHAP

NICE WORK, KID!
CLAP
THAT WAS REALLY IMPRESSIVE!
I GUESS THE TSUCHIMIKADO NAME ISN'T JUST FOR SHOW!
CLAP
CLAP
YEAH!

HUH?
...OH.
CLAP
HUH?
CLAP
YEAH...
CLAP

CLAP
CLAP
CLAP
SOB
SOB
CLAP
CLAP
TMP
TMP
STUPID-TORA!
I TOLD YOU TO USE A DEFENSE TALISMAN!
WHAT MADE YOU THINK IT WAS A GOOD IDEA...
...TO GO AGAINST A PROFESSIONAL'S DEFENSE FAMILIAR PERSONALLY IN THE FIRST PLACE?!

CLAP
CLAP
GASP
DE-FENSE TALIS-MAN?
OH, RIGHT.
IF I HAD USED A DEFENSE TALISMAN, I MIGHT HAVE BEEN ABLE TO WEAKEN THE SPELL ENOUGH TO BREAK IT...
AREN'T YOU SUPPOSED TO BE MY FAMILIAR?!
THEN HOW ABOUT LISTENING TO YOUR MASTER'S ORDERS EVERY ONCE IN A WHILE?!
CLAP
NATSUME'S VOICE SOUNDS HOARSE...
WAS SHE SCREAMING ORDERS THE WHOLE FIGHT?
SHEESH...
CLAP
CLAP
YEEEAAAH...
I DIDN'T HEAR A THING.
IS THAT HOW IMMERSED IN THE FIGHT I WAS?
QUIET!

SILENCE
DO YOU UNDERSTAND NOW?
UGH...
WOBBLE
BUT SURELY THIS SNAPPED YOU OUT OF SUCH DELUSIONS.
YOU MAY BE A STUDENT AT ONMYO ACADEMY AND FROM A PRESTIGIOUS FAMILY, BUT THAT DOESN'T MATTER.
YES, I SEE NOW HOW YOU GOT SUCH A BIG HEAD.

IF YOU WISH TO BE TREATED LIKE A PRO...
...COME BACK AFTER YOU GO THROUGH THE PROPER STEPS AND OBTAIN THE PROPER QUALIFICATIONS.
WITHOUT YOUR SELFISH THOUGHTS ABOUT GETTING SPECIAL TREATMENT RIGHT AWAY.

GRRRR...
JUST AS I SAID BEFORE WE BEGAN.
.....
SHING
WHY YOU!!

YOU KIDS SHOULD FOCUS ON COMPLETING YOUR OWN CURRICULUM.
YOU HAVE A LONG WAY TO GO BEFORE YOU'RE READY TO PRETEND YOU'RE PROS.
.....
.....
SHREEK
HEY, MR. SQUAD CAPTAIN.
YOU'RE AS TOUGH AS EVER, I SEE
OF COURSE I AM.

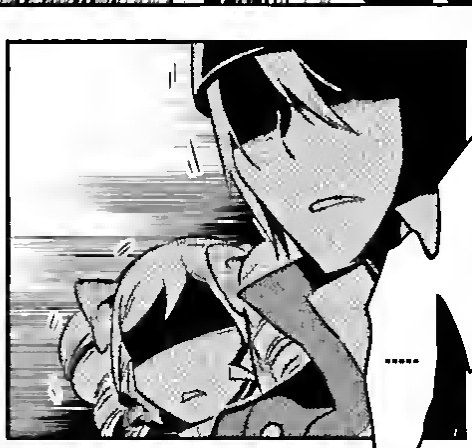
WOULD YOU MIND SNAPPING ME OUT OF MY DELUSIONS NEXT?
WAVE
WAVE
I'M NOT A TSUCHIMIKADO, BUT I HAVE CERTAIN CIR-CUMSTANCES OF MY OWN.
SO I'D LOVE ME SOME OF THAT SPECIAL TREATMENT.
I'VE GOT SOME CONFIDENCE IN MY CHANCES, EVEN AGAINST PROS.
LOOM
HEY, YOU IDIOT!
WOW.

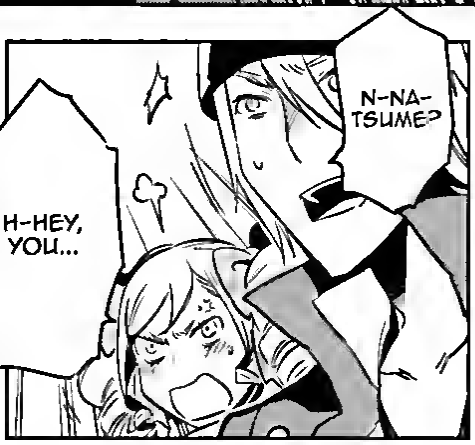
Eek!
I'M TECHNICALLY A PRO AS WELL...
BOY, YOU EXORCISTS SEEM PRETTY STUCK-UP, HUH?
OH, BUT YOU DON'T HAVE A PROBLEM WITH TWO PROS GOING AT IT, DO YOU?
I'VE NEVER PARTICIPATED IN A MOCK BATTLE BEFORE.
WOULD YOU BE SO KIND AS TO BE MY OPPONENT?
KOOM
S-SETTLE DOWN, SUZUKA-SWEETIE!!
Ohjeez! Ohjeez!
W-WHADDA YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING, TOJI?!

RMB
RMB
RMB
RMB
RMB
RMB
HUH? DON'T GET THE WRONG IDEA, IDIOT.
I JUST WANT TO SHOW UP THIS SNOOTY "PRO."
WHAT, TRYING TO AVENGE YOUR "DARLING"?
WOULD YOU MIND KEEPING YOUR PERSONAL GRUDGES OUT OF THIS UNTIL I'M DONE?
TOJI!
YOU STOP TOO, SUZUKA!
STOMP
FWAP
STOMP
STOMP
.....

FWIP

WHOOSH




N-NA-TSUME?
H-HEY, YOU...
.....

FWOOO
OOOOOOOSH
ALLOW ME TO STATE THIS PLAINLY TO AVOID ANY MISUNDER-STANDINGS...
IF YOU "PROS" HAD PROPERLY FULFILLED YOUR DUTIES...
...WE ONMYO ACADEMY STUDENTS WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN FORCED TO BORROW YOUR FACILITIES IN THE FIRST PLACE. OR AM I MISTAKEN?
!
AT THE TIME ONMYO ACADEMY WAS UNDER ATTACK...
SILENCE
...WHERE WERE YOU SO-CALLED "PRO" EXORCISTS ANYWAY? WHAT WERE YOU DOING?

OOOOOOOSH

FWOOO
ALLOW ME TO STATE THIS PLAINLY TO AVOID ANY MISUNDER-STANDINGS...
IF YOU "PROS" HAD PROPERLY FULFILLED YOUR DUTIES...
...WE ONMYO ACADEMY STUDENTS WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN FORCED TO BORROW YOUR FACILITIES IN THE FIRST PLACE. OR AM I MISTAKEN?
!
AT THE TIME ONMYO ACADEMY WAS UNDER ATTACK--
SILENCE
...WHERE WERE YOU SO-CALLED "PRO" EXORCISTS ANYWAY? WHAT WERE YOU DOING?

THE REASON WE SEEK TRAINING BEYOND OUR STATIONS...
...IS BECAUSE WE WERE FORCED TO DEFEND OURSELVES.
MR. TSUCHI-MIKADO! THAT'S TAKING IT A LITTLE FAR!

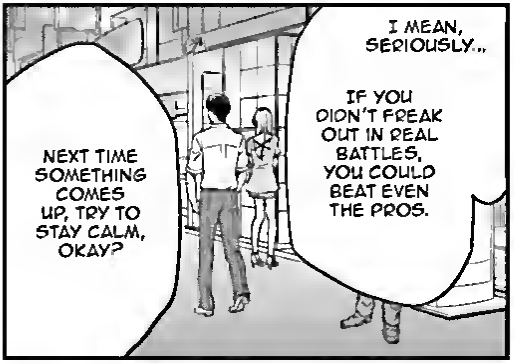
WHISTLE♪
.....
I WON'T USE HOKUTO.
MR TSUCHI-MIKADO!

GLARE
I TRUST YOU'LL JOIN ME...
WHOOSH
...FOR A MATCH?
END OF CHAPTER 53

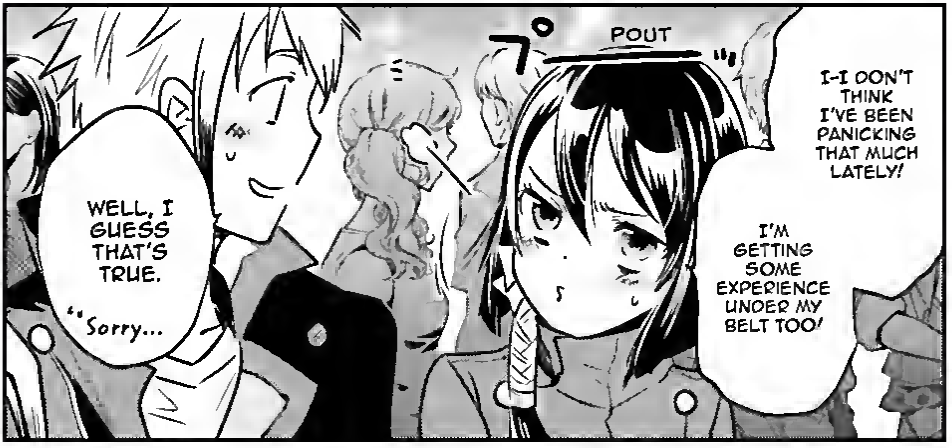
CHAPTER 13
CHANCE
ENCOUNTER

JR渋谷駅
SHEESH...
I CAN'T BELIEVE HOW THAT ETOU GUY ACTED...
BLAH
BLAH
BLAH
BEEP BEEP
W-W-WITH ALL DUE RESPECT, I FEEL THE SAME WAY.
H-HE HAD THE NERVE TO ACT ALL HIGH AND MIGHTY WHEN M-MASTER HARUTORA'S FIERCE FIGHTING GAVE HIM TERRIBLE TROUBLE...
MIFFED
...AFTER HOW HARD YOU TRIED...
IN THE END...
...WITH THE EXCEPTION OF SUZUKA, WHO LOST INTEREST, WE ALL TOOK TURNS FIGHTING MOCK BATTLES AGAINST THE EXORCISTS.
PLEASE ANYTHING BUT THAT
WAIT, KON!
I, KON, SHALL PERSONALLY TAKE HIM--
TH-THE IMPUDENT LOUSE...

...BUT IT WAS CALLED PREMATURELY BY MR. FUJIWARA, WHO FEARED AN ACCIDENT, AND COUNTED IT AS A DRAW.
AGHAST
THE SECOND BATTLE BETWEEN NATSUME AND CAPTAIN ETOU WAS SO FIERCE IT DUMBFOUNDED THE OTHER EXORCISTS...


I MEAN, SERIOUSLY...
IF YOU DIDN'T FREAK OUT IN REAL BATTLES, YOU COULD BEAT EVEN THE PROS.
NEXT TIME SOMETHING COMES UP, TRY TO STAY CALM, OKAY?

CAPTAIN ETOU'S APPARENTLY AMONG THE TOP THREE OF THE MEGURO BRANCH.
YOU'RE SOMETHING ELSE, HUH, NATSUME?


POUT
I-I DON'T THINK I'VE BEEN PANICKING THAT MUCH LATELY!
I'M GETTING SOME EXPERIENCE UNDER MY BELT TOO!
WELL, I GUESS THAT'S TRUE.
"Sorry...

BACK WHEN WE WERE FRESHMAN, SHE NEVER COULD HAVE DONE THAT.
WHEN DOMAN ATTACKED, SHE TOOK THE LEAD.

WE'RE ALL MAKING PROGRESS THE BEST WE CAN.
TOJI WAS PRETTY AWESOME BACK THERE TOO.
I THINK HE REALLY IS THE STRONGEST OF ALL OF US.
THE ONLY MEMBER OF OUR GROUP WHO WON A MOCK BATTLE WAS TOJI.
IN THE MIDDLE OF HIS BATTLE WITH THE EXORCIST WHO TOOK CAPTAIN ETOU'S PLACE, HE SUDDENLY RELEASED HIS SEAL...
...AND TOOK ADVANTAGE OF HIS OPPONENT'S ASTONISHMENT TO PULL OFF A WIN.
HE EVEN TOOK DOWN A SECOND EXORCIST THROUGH SHEER FORCE.
I MEAN, AFTER THEY FOUND OUT...
...CAPTAIN ETOU HAD THE EXORCISTS STAY BEHIND AT THE BUREAU FOR A LECTURE ON HOW TO BE PREPARED TO BATTLE SPIRITUAL DISASTERS
WE DID GET SOME RESULTS OUT OF IT, SO I'M GLAD WE DID THE MOCK BATTLES.
THEY MIGHT EVEN LET US PARTICIPATE AGAIN...
OH...
NOT THAT I BELIEVE CAPTAIN ETOU WILL PERMIT IT...
THAT ETOU GUY JUST DOESN'T GET IT!
HMPH!
HMPH!

HE DOESN'T UNDER-STAND...
...WHY WE WANT TO GET STRONGER SO BADLY.
THE REASON NATSUME, WHO USUALLY RESPECTS HER ELDERS ..
...GOT SO MAD AT CAPTAIN ETOU WAS...
YEAH...
PROB-ABLY...
...FOR MY SAKE.
..THANKS, NATSUME.
BLINK
BLUSH
TO BE HONEST
..I DON'T THINK WHAT CAPTAIN ETOU SAID WAS WRONG..
..BUT...

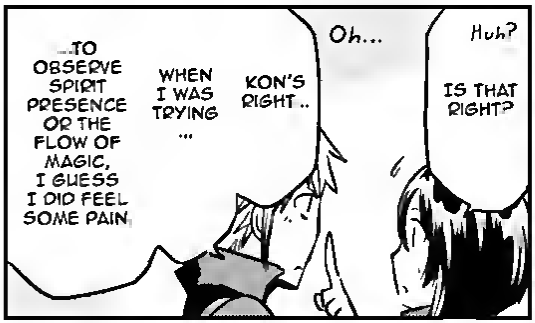
PLUS...
HARU-TORA..
I THINK WE WERE JUST MORE RIGHT
I MEAN, WE...
...NEED SPECIAL TREAT-MENT.
I SHOULD'VE BEEN THE ONE..
...TO SAY WHAT YOU DID WITH MY HEAD HELD HIGH.
THAT'S NOT TRUE!
Y-YOU DID MORE THAN ENOUGH!
YOU REALLY WERE...
UM...

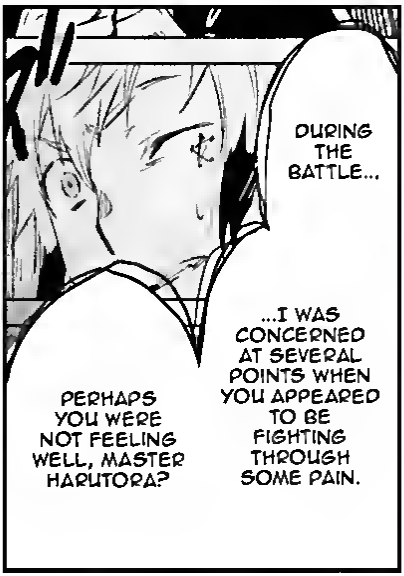
FWISH
KON'S PRESENCE
...C...
...COOL OUT THERE...
...TODAY.
HEY NOW, I THINK THAT MAY BE THE FIRST TIME YOU'VE EVER COMPLI-MENTED ME.
EVEN IF IT'S ONLY FLATTERY, I'LL GLADLY TAKE IT.

I FEEL IMPATIENT WITH MYSELF.
HOW CAN I PUT IT...?
HUH? BUT I WAS A MESS IN THAT FIGHT.
YOU REALLY SURPRISED ME!
TH-THAT WASN'T FLATTERY!
IT'S LIKE THERE ARE HEAVY CHAINS WRAPPED AROUND MY ENTIRE BODY.
THE GAP BETWEEN THE IMAGE IN MY HEAD AND REALITY IS SO FRUSTRATING.
JEEZ, I FEEL SO LAME.
MAN, IT'S HARD TO PUT IT INTO WORDS...
WAS THERE ANYTHING ...
...OFF DURING THE BATTLE?
HEY, KON.
WHAT DID YOU THINK OF TODAY?
HUH?!
POOF
HARD TO PUT INTO WORDS...?

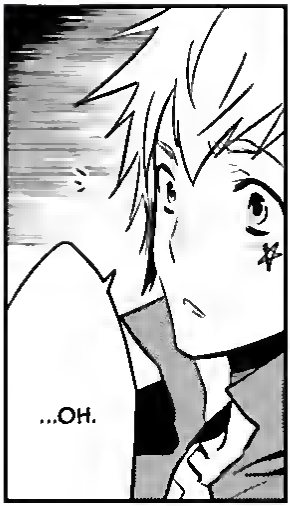
W-W-W-WAS THERE PER-CHANCE...
...SOMETHING LACKING IN MY PERFORMANCE TODAY, M-M-MASTER?!
NO! NO! NOT WITH YOU, I MEANT WITH ME!
AND PLEASE STAY IN-VISIBLE! I'M BEGGING YOU!
WHUMP
BLAH
BLAH

OH, BUT...
WHOOM
TH-THERE WAS NOTHING DEFICIENT IN YOUR CONDUCT--

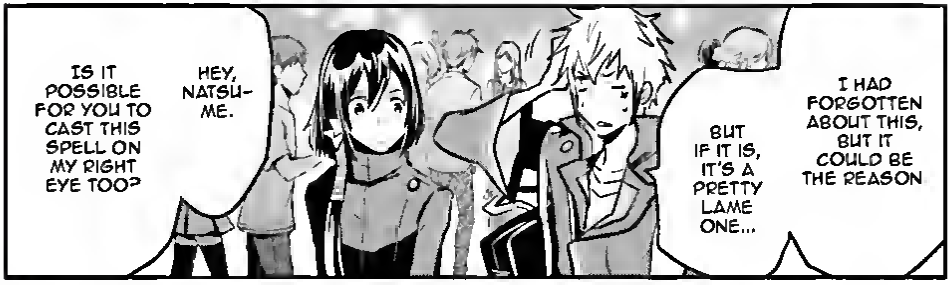

...TO OBSERVE SPIRIT PRESENCE OR THE FLOW OF MAGIC, I GUESS I DID FEEL SOME PAIN.
WHEN I WAS TRYING ...
KON'S RIGHT..
Oh...
Huh?
IS THAT RIGHT?

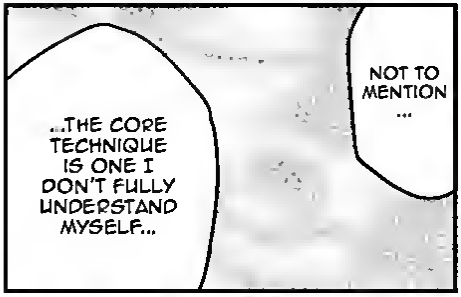

DURING THE BATTLE...
...I WAS CONCERNED AT SEVERAL POINTS WHEN YOU APPEARED TO BE FIGHTING THROUGH SOME PAIN.
PERHAPS YOU WERE NOT FEELING WELL, MASTER HARUTORA?

STRAINING?
I MAY HAVE BEEN STRAINING TOO HARD.


...OH.

I GUESS IT'S BECAUSE I'M NOT A NATURAL SEER...
...BUT I CAN'T HELP BUT TRY TO SEE THEM WITH MY EYES.
YEAH, I KNOW THAT.
BUT.. SPIRIT PRESENCE AND MAGIC AREN'T THINGS YOU "SEE" IN THE FIRST PLACE.
YOU "FEEL" THEM.
SIGHT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH IT.


IS IT POSSIBLE FOR YOU TO CAST THIS SPELL ON MY RIGHT EYE TOO?
HEY, NATSU-ME.
BUT IF IT IS, IT'S A PRETTY LAME ONE...
I HAD FORGOTTEN ABOUT THIS, BUT IT COULD BE THE REASON


...THE CORE TECHNIQUE IS ONE I DON'T FULLY UNDERSTAND MYSELF...
NOT TO MENTION ...

NO, LIKE I WAS SAYING..
..THAT SPELL IS MADE UP OF MULTIPLE TECHNIQUES I RECOMPOSED TOGETHER.
PLUS...
...THAT SPELL ISN'T EXACTLY CAST ON YOUR "EYE."

YES.. IT'S ONE MY FATHER TAUGHT ME LONG AGO
HUH?
I-IS THAT SO?

IT'S A SPELL CURRENTLY IN EFFECT ON ME, BUT...
...I DIDN'T KNOW A THING ABOUT IT.
I THOUGHT I WOULD NEED IT IN THE FUTURE, SO I TRIED DESPERATELY TO MEMORIZE IT...
IT'S A PRETTY COMPLEX SPELL.
THERE ARE PLENTY OF SPELLS FOR TEMPORARILY GIVING PEOPLE SPIRIT SIGHT...
...BUT THE ONE I CAST ON YOU IS A SECRET SPELL PASSED DOWN IN THE TSUCHIMIKADO FAMILY.
NATSUME DOESN'T GET ALONG WELL WITH HER DAD.
MY DAD, THE ONMYO MAGE DOCTOR, MAY BE EASIER TO ASK.
OH, BUT YOUR FATHER MAY KNOW IT AS WELL.
THEY MIGHT BE ABLE TO MAKE FINER ADJUSTMENTS THAN ME.
IF THE PAIN CONTINUES...
...WE SHOULD ASK MY FATHER TO TAKE A LOOK AT IT.
...BUT, NATSUME...
YES, I THINK THAT WOULD BE BETTER AS WELL.
It's been a while since I talked to my old man anyway.
HUH, THEN I'LL GIVE IT A SHOT.

HUH? I ONLY WANTED TO MEMORIZE IT BECAUSE YOU--
I'M SURPRISED YOU REMEMBERED A SPELL THAT COMPLICATED
I MEAN, A SPELL TO GIVE SOMEONE SPIRIT SIGHT...
"IN THE *FUTURE*," THOUGH? IT SEEMS LIKE THERE'D BE PLENTY OF USES FOR IT ALL THE TIME
IT WAS JUST BY CHANCE! ALL BY CHANCE! I JUST, UM... HAPPENED TO HAVE SOME PERSONAL INTEREST IN IT!
OH, N-NO!
BLUUUSH
STILL, THOUGH...
HMM? YEAH?
Ohjeez! Ohjeez!
IT ISN'T LIKE I LEARNED IT IN PREPARATION FOR A DAY I WAS SURE WOULD COME.
Ohjeez!

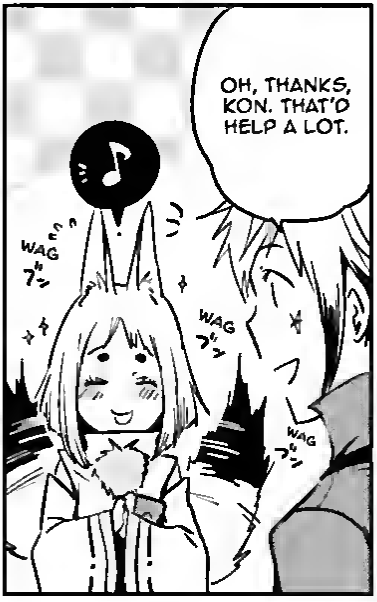
...I'VE SEEN TONS OF HIGH-LEVEL SPELLS SO FAR.
BUT...
AND IF IT IS, IT WAS THAT MAGIC BATTLE THAT WAS THE IMPETUS.
WHY DID I ONLY REACT TO THEM THEN?
WOW...
IT HASN'T EVEN BEEN A YEAR SINCE I BECAME A SPIRIT SEER.
BUT I GUESS IT ISN'T STRANGE FOR AN IMPROVISED SPELL TO ALREADY BE SHOWING ITS AGE.
...ONTO THE ROOF WITH NOWHERE TO ESCAPE.
...AND WE WERE BACKED INTO A CORNER...
THE SCHOOL WAS SURROUNDED BY FAMILIARS...
...DOMAN SUDDENLY SHOWED UP DURING LUNCH BREAK.
THAT DAY...
...THE ROOF?
HEY, NATSUME.

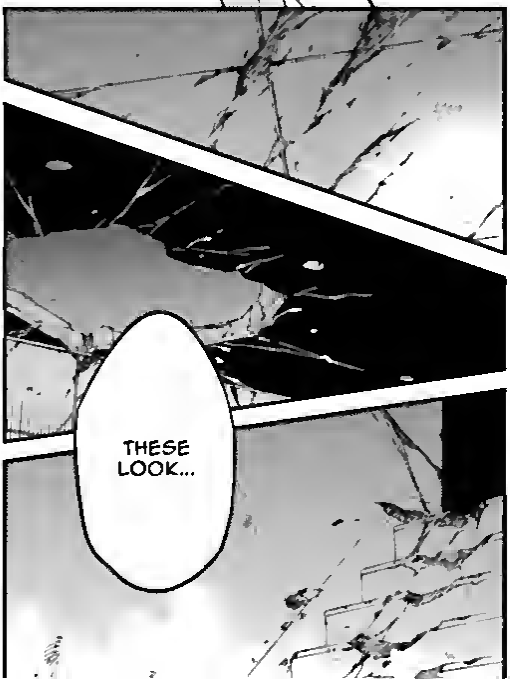
HAVE YOU HEARD ANYTHING ABOUT THE SCHOOL ROOF FROM KYOKO?
HUH?
W-WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
THE ALTAR.
I MEAN THE ALTAR ON THE SCHOOL ROOF.
ISN'T IT JUST LIKE THE ALTAR USED IN THE THE TAIZAN FUKUN RITUAL BACK IN MIYAMA?
WHAT'S THAT THING DOING ON THE ROOF OF ONMYO ACADEMY?
COME TO THINK OF IT...
...THE PRINCIPAL SAID SHE'D TELL US LATER...
...BUT WE NEVER HEARD THE REST.
OH!
HARU-TORA?
.....
SAY, NATSU-ME
THANKS, HARUTORA.
I'M GLAD YOU SAID THAT.
GOSH, I CAN'T BELIEVE IT SLIPPED MY MIND WHEN IT'S SO IMPORTANT ...

WHADDA YOU THINK OF STOPPING BY THE SCHOOL RIGHT NOW?
GREETINGS, KIDS.
LONG TIME NO SEE.
WHAT BUSINESS BRINGS YOU HERE SO LATE?
I CAN'T SAY I APPROVE OF STUDENTS WANDERING AROUND AT NIGHT.
OH? THEY ALREADY FIXED YOU GUYS?

I HEARD THE FEMALE STUDENTS APPRAISE US AS SUCH.
"LOVELY"?
They don't?
WE SHOULD BE BACK TO NORMAL BY THE TIME REPAIRS TO THE SCHOOL ARE COMPLETE...
...SO PLEASE WAIT JUST A LITTLE LONGER TO SEE OUR GALLANT, LOVELY FORMS ONCE AGAIN.
UNFORTUNATELY, OUR REPAIRS ARE NOT FULLY COMPLETE...
...WHICH IS WHY YOU ARE SEEING OUR REAL BODIES.
SO? WHAT BUSINESS BRINGS YOU TO THE SCHOOL?
HEH HEH
IN ADDITION, MAGICAL DEFENSES ARE ACTIVE THROUGHOUT THE BUILDING.
DO BE CAREFUL.
THAT IS FINE WITH US, BUT DO NOT GET IN THE CONSTRUCTION WORKERS' WAY.
CAN WE COME IN?
OH, WE JUST WONDERED WHAT KIND OF SHAPE IT WAS IN.
WHAT, INSIDE?
WHOA, IT'S PITCH BLACK IN HERE.

GUESS THEY DIDN'T PUT UP ANY CONSTRUCTION LAMPS...
LET'S SEE. THE LIGHT SWITCH IS...
FWOOM
M-M-MASTER HARUTORA!
I, KON, SHALL BE YOUR GUIDE.
FWOOM
FWOOM


OH, THANKS, KON. THAT'D HELP A LOT.
WAG
WAG
WAG


THESE LOOK...

THAT WAS A FULLY JUSTIFIED USE OF FORCE!
HOKUTO WASN'T ON A RAMPAGE! HE WAS FIGHTING!
HEY, WATCH YOUR MOUTH!
CRUMBLE
...MORE LIKE SCARS FROM HOKUTO'S RAMPAGE THAN DOMAN'S FAMILIARS, HUH?
VWOOM
TWICH
HMM?
N-NO.
THEY'RE WEARING A SCHOOL UNIFORM, SO THEY ARE IN ALL LIKELIHOOD A STUDENT OF THE ACADEMY...
I-I SIMPLY... DO NOT RECOGNIZE THEIR FACE
?
WHISPER
...M-MASTER HARUTORA...
..THERE IS SOMEONE AT THE ALTAR
HUH?
WHO IS IT? IT'S NOT ONE OF THE CONSTRUCTION WORKERS?

WHOOSH
I'LL CAST AN INVISIBILITY SPELL
...LET'S INVESTIGATE FIRST.
I CAN'T IMAGINE THERE'S ANY DANGER, BUT...
DINK
!
OH, THAT'S RIGHT. I JUST HAVE TO "LOOK."
IT'S TOO DARK TO SEE MUCH...
WHO'S THERE?!
OH CRAP, I FOCUSED MY MAGIC ON SEEING AND BROKE THE CONCEALMENT SPELL!
WE'RE GOING TO TURN ON SOME LIGHTS.
BUT THAT'S ALL THEY ARE, OKAY? JUST LIGHTS.
WAIT A SECOND!
WE'RE STUDENTS HERE TOO.
WAS THAT A GIRL'S VOICE?

FWOOM
FWOOM
FWOOM
KON, MAKE SOME FIRE.
FWOOM

YOU'RE THE TSUCHIMI-KADO--
GASP

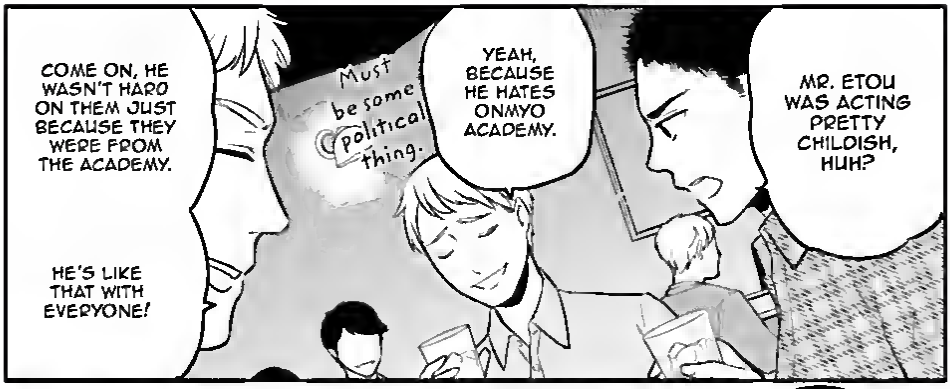
GLARE
STOMP
STOMP
STOMP
FWIP
!
YOU ARE NATSUME TSUCHIMI-KADO...
AND YOU ARE HARUTORA TSUCHIMI-KADO, AM I RIGHT?
BA-DUMP
しぃきん...
THE WAY SHE TALKS...
NICE TO MEET YOU.
MY NAME IS TAKIKO SOUMA.

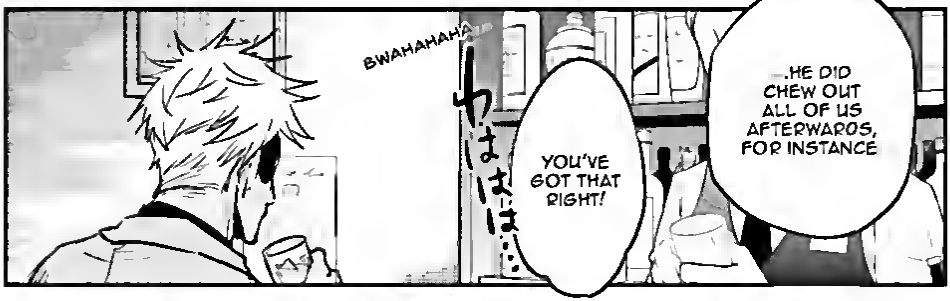
THIS WAS...
LIKE YOU...
...I AM ONE WHO WALKS THE PATH OF ONMYO.
...HOW WE MET...
...TAKIKO SOUMA.

THIS WAS...
LIKE YOU...
...I AM ONE WHO WALKS THE PATH OF ONMYO.

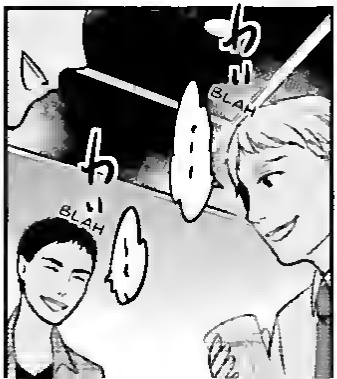
...HOW WE MET...
...TAKIKO SOUMA.

KLANK-A-KLANK
MURMUR
MURMUR
BLAH BLAH
MURMUR MURMUR
EXOR-CISTS, EH?
DON'T SEE THEM MUCH AROUND HERE.
KLINK
LEAVING THE PLACE IS TOO MUCH TROUBLE...
...BUT DRINKING IN THE SAME BAR AS A BUNCH OF EXORCISTS WOULD BE JUST FOOLISH.
NOW THEN...
MAN, THOSE KIDS WERE REALLY SOMETHING.
I KNOW THEY'RE *TSUCHIMIKADOS*, BUT THEY'RE STILL ONLY STUDENTS!


COME ON, HE WASN'T HARD ON THEM JUST BECAUSE THEY WERE FROM THE ACADEMY.
HE'S LIKE THAT WITH EVERYONE!
Must be some political thing.
YEAH, BECAUSE HE HATES ONMYO ACADEMY.
MR. ETOU WAS ACTING PRETTY CHILDISH, HUH?


BWAHAHAHA
わはは…
YOU'VE GOT THAT RIGHT!
...HE DID CHEW OUT ALL OF US AFTERWARDS, FOR INSTANCE

...AND THEY FOUGHT MOCK BATTLES WITH THE EXORCISTS?
MURMUR MURMUR MURMUR
MURMUR
OH?
SO THE ACADEMY STUDENTS ARE BORROWING THE BUREAU'S FACILITIES...


BLAH
BLAH

THESE MEN SAY THEY FOUGHT A TSUCHIMIKADO... SO IT'S PRETTY EASY TO TELL WHICH GROUP THEY'RE TALKING ABOUT.

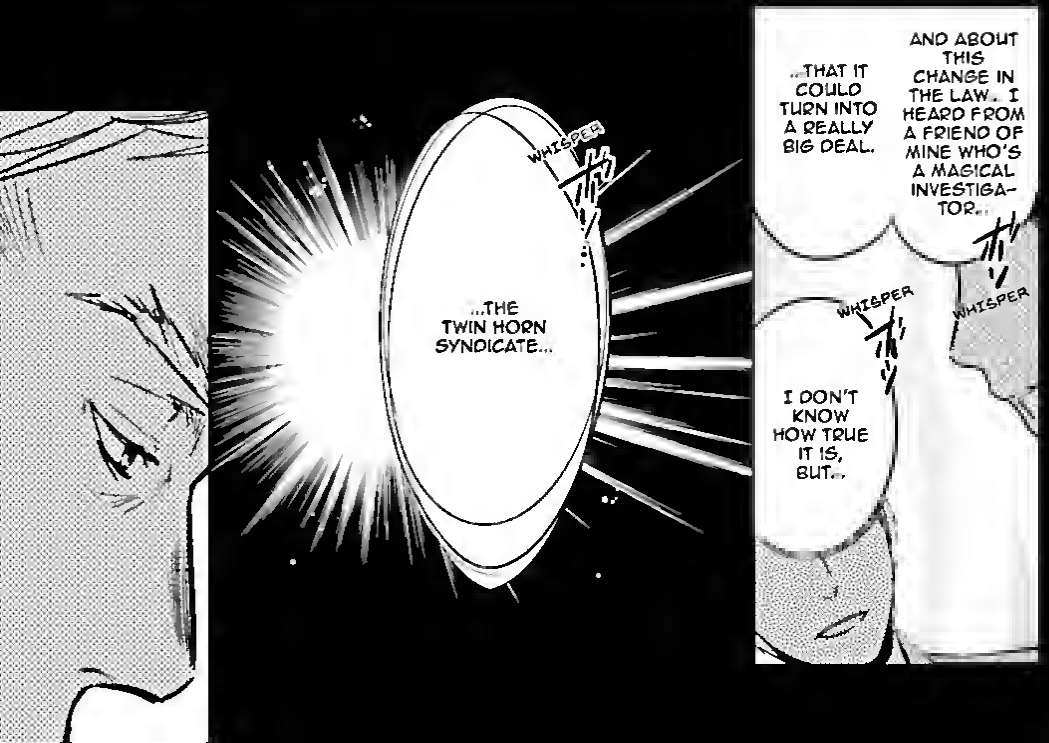
APPARENTLY, HE HASN'T AWOKEN YET.
KLINK
AMONG THEM, THE NEXT HEAD OF THE TSUCHIMIKADOS AND THAT HALF-OGRE BOY SEEM TO HAVE FARED PARTICULARLY WELL.
OH?
I WONDER HOW HE DID...

I THINK I'VE GOTTA BELIEVE THAT KID REALLY IS THE REINCARNATION OF YOU-KNOW-WHO.
WHOA, CAREFUL WHAT YOU SAY.
BLAH
BLAH
HE WAS FIGHTING THE SAME WAY HE DOES ON A JOB.
AND THE CAPTAIN WAS FIGHTING PRETTY SERIOUSLY TOO.
BLAH
BOY, IT'S STILL HARD TO BELIEVE SHE FOUGHT THE CAPTAIN TO A DRAW.

YEAH, I DID.
LOOKS LIKE IT'S FINALLY BEEN SETTLED, HUH?
WHISPER
WHISPER
...OH HEY, DID YOU HEAR?
ABOUT THE CHANGE IN LAW..
WHISPER

JUST AFTER THE ISSUE CAME UP AGAIN AT THE SPRING SECOND PURIFICATION, THERE WAS THE ATTACK LAST MONTH.
THAT WAS APPARENTLY THE DECIDING FACTOR.
HUH...
WELL, NO MATTER HOW IT HAPPENED, THE CHIEF'S EFFORTS BORE FRUIT.

FOR THE PAST FEW YEARS...
...ESPECIALLY SINCE THE THE MOMO-NO-SEKKU PURIFICATION THE YEAR BEFORE LAST. IT LOOKS LIKE HE'S BEEN WORKING ON THE RELATED AGENCIES QUITE VIGOROUSLY.
YOU MEAN THAT REPRESENTATIVE SATAKE, RIGHT?
I HEAR HE AND THE CHIEF ARE ON PRETTY GOOD TERMS...


AND ABOUT THIS CHANGE IN THE LAW... I HEARD FROM A FRIEND OF MINE WHO'S A MAGICAL INVESTIGATOR...
...THAT IT COULD TURN INTO A REALLY BIG DEAL.
WHISPER
WHISPER
I DON'T KNOW HOW TRUE IT IS, BUT...
WHISPER
...THE TWIN HORN SYNDICATE...

YEAH, I CAN BELIEVE THAT.
YOU DON'T THINK THAT'S WHY THEY CAME TO OUR BRANCH, DO YOU?
NO, THAT'S JUST RIDICULOUS ...
...I THINK...
...OH, GREAT. I HOPE THEY DON'T START ALL THAT TERRORIST MESS AGAIN.
PLUS, IF THAT STORY'S TRUE...
...COULDN'T THE SPARKS REACH THAT KID FROM TODAY AS WELL?
KNK
COME TO THINK OF IT, SINCE HE DIED AGAIN...
...I HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO CONFIRM WHAT THEY'VE BEEN UP TO.
NOT THAT IT'S ANY SKIN OFF MY BACK...

YET LAST MONTH I WENT OUT THERE BRIMMING WITH CURIOSITY.
AT LEAST, IN THEORY...
I GUESS...
...I MUST SIMPLY BE...
...BORED.
THUNK
SO I KEEP COMING UP WITH REASONS TO THINK ABOUT THEM...
CHECK, PLEASE.

THEM...
FLUTTER
END OF CHAPTER 54

TAKIKO...
...SOUMA?
CHAPTER 55
THE DETAILS

BA-DUMP
HOW ABOUT YOU... "HARU-TORA"?
SO...
...CAN I CALL YOU "NATSUME" TOO?
YEP!
BUT YOU CAN CALL ME TAKIKO.
...WHEN-EVER SHE OPENS HER MOUTH, I CAN'T HELP BUT THINK...
...OF HER.
THE WAY SHE SPEAKS...
...HERE OF ALL PLACES.
...IN PER-SON...
BUT IMAGINE MY SURPRISE AND JOY AT RUNNING INTO YOU...
I KNOW A LOT ABOUT YOU TWO, SO I JUST COULDN'T HELP IT...
AM I GETTING TOO FRIENDLY TOO SOON?
OH, SORRY. I KNOW WE JUST MET.

THAT'S THE SPIRIT!
UM... MISS SOUMA..
CALL ME "TAKIKO"!
...OR IS THAT MOVING TOO FAST FOR YOU?
NO, IT'S NOT THAT..
TH-THEN, "TAKIKO"
ARE YOU, UM..
..A FRESH-MAN?
OR ARE YOU A SENIOR?
OH, MY CASE IS A LITTLE UNIQUE.
THERE ARE SOME EXTENUATING CIRCUM-STANCES INVOLVED.
BUT I AM A STUDENT OF THE ACADEMY, JUST LIKE YOU.
THAT PART IS TRUE.
OH...
...SO YOU ARE.
SO.. TAKIKO..

YOU CAME TO SEE THE HOLY ALTAR, DIDN'T YOU?

WHAT WERE YOU DOING HERE...
...AT THIS HOUR ALL ALONE?
PROBABLY THE SAME THING YOU TWO CAME FOR.

THE HOLY ALTAR?
YOU MEAN *THIS* ALTAR?
THEN, YOU... CAME ALL THIS WAY TO SEE IT?
THAT'S RIGHT.

HMM...
...BUT IT'S KIND OF HARD TO ASK HER.
ESPECIALLY WHEN SHE'S ACTING SO FRIENDLY TO US WHEN WE'VE ONLY JUST MET...
It doesn't seem like she means any harm...

WAIT, HOW DID SHE KNOW ABOUT THE ALTAR ANYWAY?
WE ONLY FOUND OUT ABOUT IT DURING DOMAN'S ATTACK...

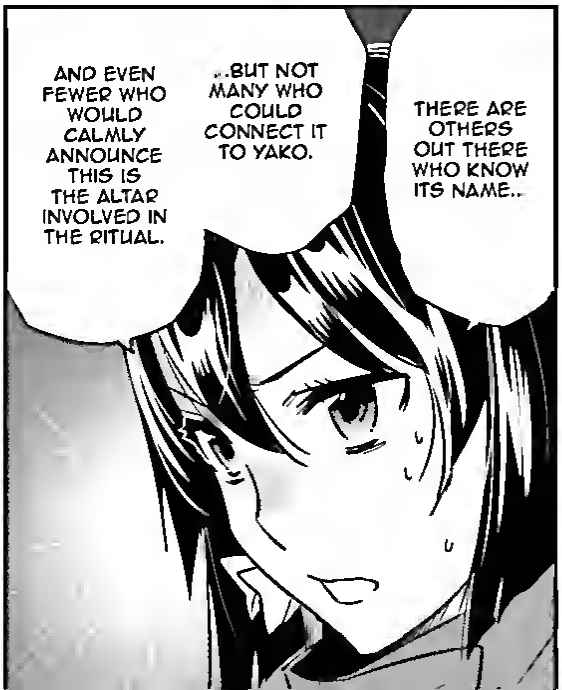
...”HOKUTO.”
IT FEELS LIKE IF I'M NOT CAREFUL, I'M GOING TO ACCIDENTALLY CALL HER...
PLUS, WITH THE WAY SHE TALKS...
STARE
...AND HER GENERAL ATMOSPHERE...
OF COURSE NOT!
I COULDN'T POSSIBLY COMPREHEND THE HOLY ALTAR!
GRR!
IT MAY BE RUDE TO ASK, BUT DO YOU EVEN KNOW WHAT THIS ALTAR IS?
...TAKIKO.
I MEAN, THE HOLY ALTAR...
...IS THE ESSENCE OF THE TSUCHIMIKADO FAMILY MAGIC.
IT'S THE LARGEST MAGICAL LEGACY LEFT BEHIND BY ABE NO SEIMEI!
WE DON'T EVEN KNOW WHETHER THE ONE WHO GOT CLOSEST TO ITS MYSTERIES, YAKO TSUCHIMIKADO, UNDERSTOOD IT COMPLETELY..
WHAT'S THAT SUPPOSED TO MEAN?!
CHILL

HOW DO YOU KNOW THAT...?
DON'T TELL ME YOU KNOW ABOUT THE RITUAL HELD HERE?
YOU MEAN THE TAIZAN FUKUN RITUAL?
OF COURSE.

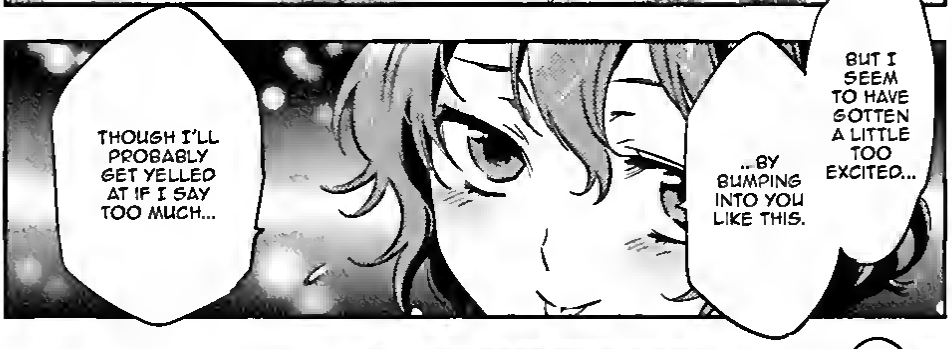
HUH?
HUH?
WAIT..
ISN'T THAT SUPPOSED TO BE A TSUCHI-MIKADO SECRET?

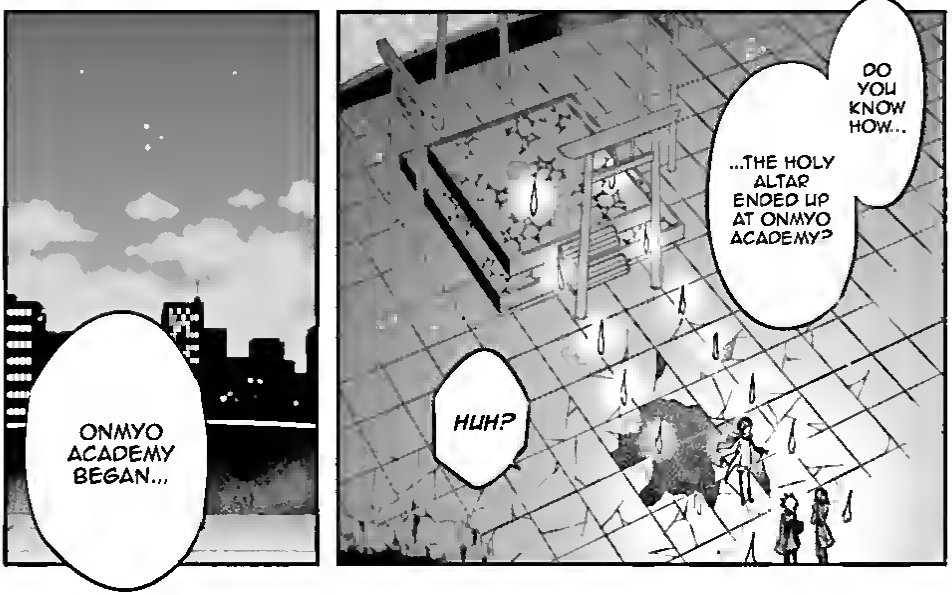
ALTHOUGH, WHAT I KNOW..
..IS JUST THE BAREST TIP OF THE ICEBERG'S TIP.

WHO IN THE WORLD ARE YOU?
DIDN'T I TELL YOU?


THERE ARE OTHERS OUT THERE WHO KNOW ITS NAME..
..BUT NOT MANY WHO COULD CONNECT IT TO YAKO.
AND EVEN FEWER WHO WOULD CALMLY ANNOUNCE THIS IS THE ALTAR INVOLVED IN THE RITUAL.

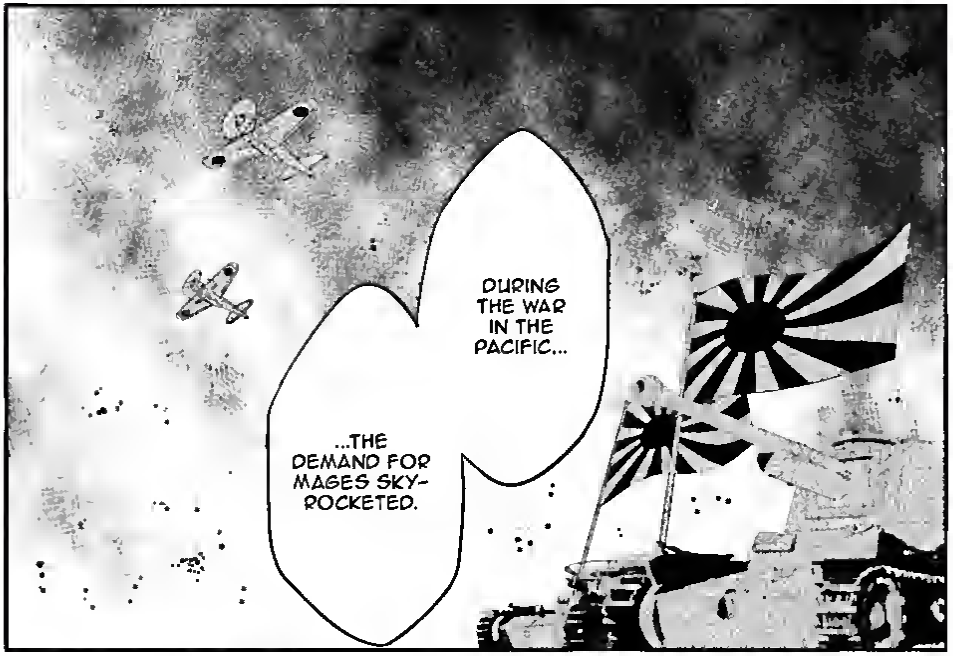
*LIKE YOU...
"...I AM ONE WHO WALKS THE PATH OF ONMYO."

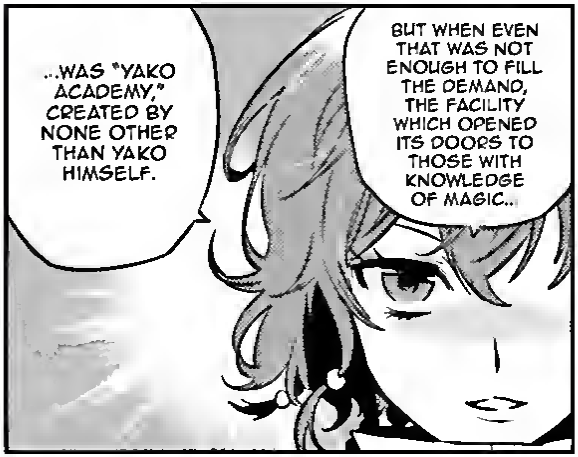

BUT I SEEM TO HAVE GOTTEN A LITTLE TOO EXCITED...
...BY BUMPING INTO YOU LIKE THIS.
THOUGH I'LL PROBABLY GET YELLED AT IF I SAY TOO MUCH...

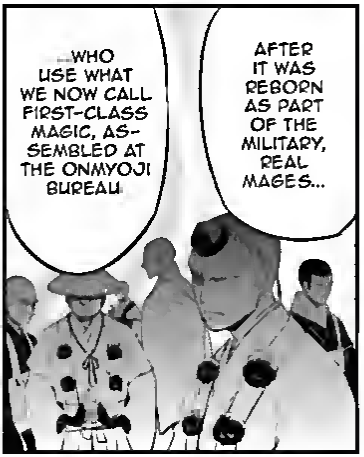

DO YOU KNOW HOW...
...THE HOLY ALTAR ENDED UP AT ONMYO ACADEMY?
HUH?
ONMYO ACADEMY BEGAN...

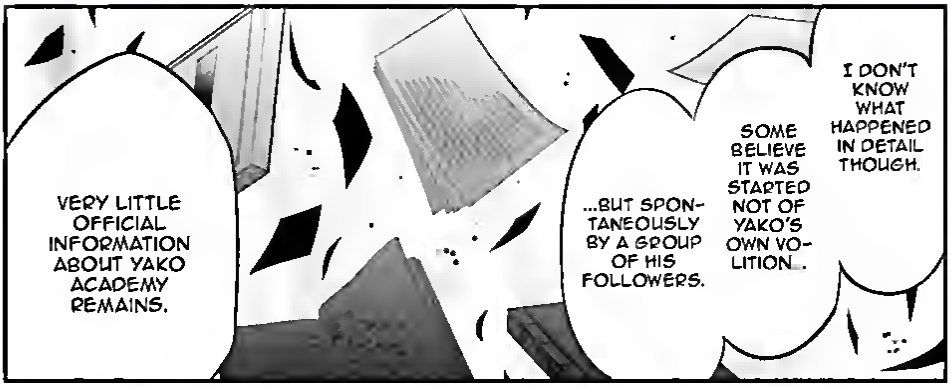
...AS A PRIVATE SCHOOL CREATED BY YAKO TSUCHI-MIKADO.
?!
JUST THINK ABOUT IT...

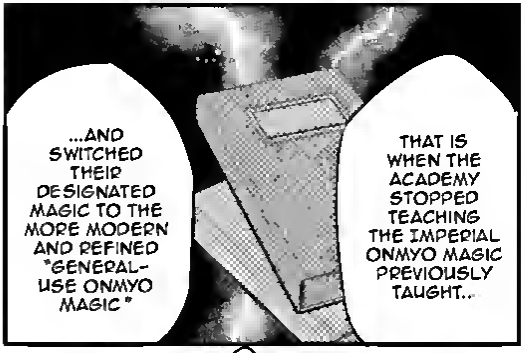
WHICH MEANS THE SCHOOL WAS FOUNDED NEARLY FIFTY YEARS AGO.
YOU TWO ARE STUDENTS OF THE ACADEMY'S 47TH CLASS.

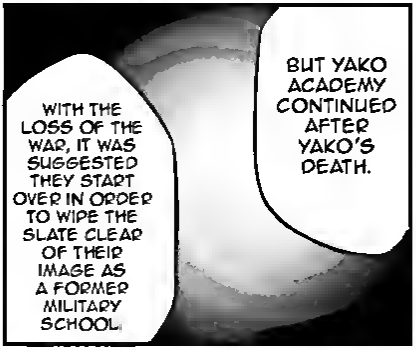

DURING THE WAR IN THE PACIFIC...
...THE DEMAND FOR MAGES SKY-ROCKETED.

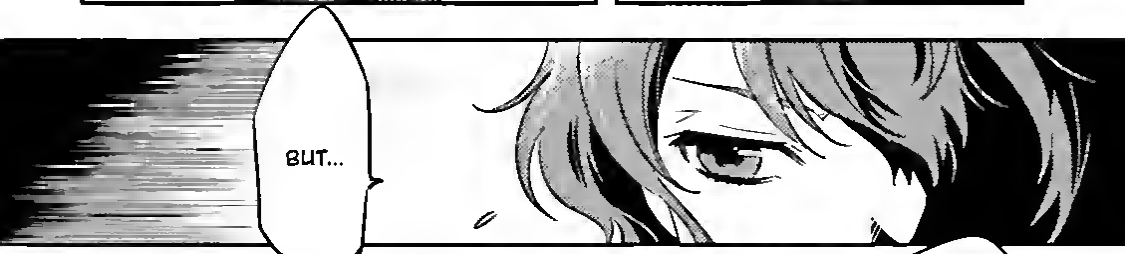

...WAS "YAKO ACADEMY," CREATED BY NONE OTHER THAN YAKO HIMSELF.
BUT WHEN EVEN THAT WAS NOT ENOUGH TO FILL THE DEMAND, THE FACILITY WHICH OPENED ITS DOORS TO THOSE WITH KNOWLEDGE OF MAGIC...


...WHO USE WHAT WE NOW CALL FIRST-CLASS MAGIC, ASSEMBLED AT THE ONMYOJI BUREAU.
AFTER IT WAS REBORN AS PART OF THE MILITARY, REAL MAGES...

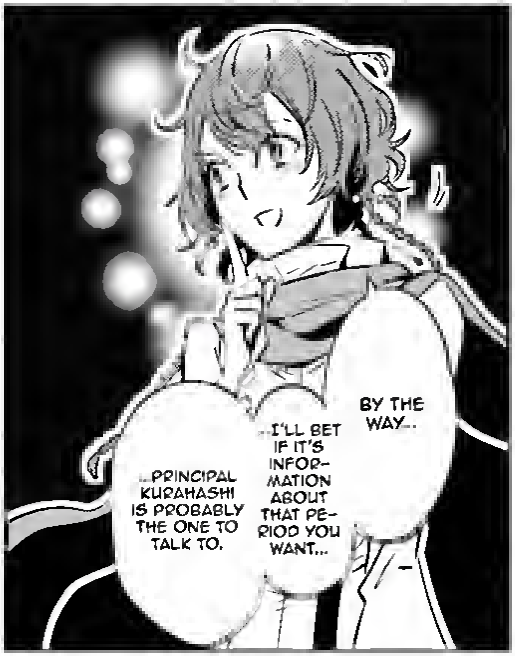

VERY LITTLE OFFICIAL INFORMATION ABOUT YAKO ACADEMY REMAINS.
...BUT SPONTANEOUSLY BY A GROUP OF HIS FOLLOWERS.
SOME BELIEVE IT WAS STARTED NOT OF YAKO'S OWN VOLITION...
I DON'T KNOW WHAT HAPPENED IN DETAIL THOUGH.

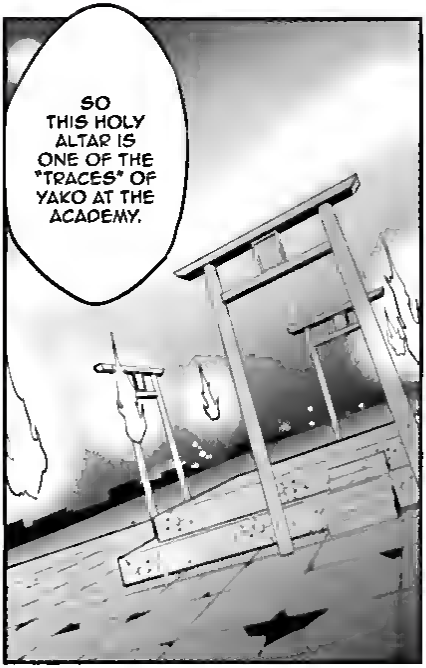

...AND SWITCHED THEIR DESIGNATED MAGIC TO THE MORE MODERN AND REFINED "GENERAL-USE ONMYO MAGIC"
THAT IS WHEN THE ACADEMY STOPPED TEACHING THE IMPERIAL ONMYO MAGIC PREVIOUSLY TAUGHT...

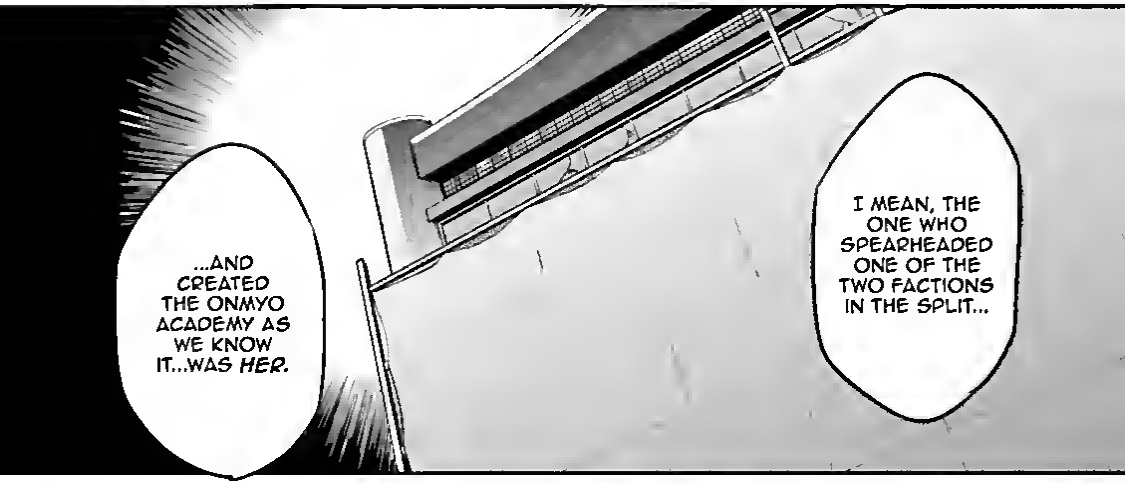

WITH THE LOSS OF THE WAR, IT WAS SUGGESTED THEY START OVER IN ORDER TO WIPE THE SLATE CLEAR OF THEIR IMAGE AS A FORMER MILITARY SCHOOL.
BUT YAKO ACADEMY CONTINUED AFTER YAKO'S DEATH.


BUT...

...AND ONE OF THOSE FACTIONS WAS REBORN AS THE ONMYO ACADEMY WE KNOW TODAY.
...CAUSING YAKO ACADEMY TO SPLIT INTO TWO FACTIONS...
...THIS WAS LIKE REJECTING THE MAGIC OF YAKO...


BY THE WAY...
I'LL BET IF IT'S INFORMATION ABOUT THAT PERIOD YOU WANT...
...PRINCIPAL KURAHASHI IS PROBABLY THE ONE TO TALK TO.


SO THIS HOLY ALTAR IS ONE OF THE "TRACES" OF YAKO AT THE ACADEMY.


I MEAN, THE ONE WHO SPEARHEADED ONE OF THE TWO FACTIONS IN THE SPLIT...
...AND CREATED THE ONMYO ACADEMY AS WE KNOW IT...WAS *HER.*

HUH?

WHEN SHE WAS YOUNG, SHE WAS PERSONALLY SELECTED BY YAKO AS A FOUNDING MEMBER OF YAKO ACADEMY.
AFTER THE WAR, SHE MARRIED INTO THE KURAHASHI FAMILY, LEAVING YAKO...
...BUT I HEAR SHE PERSONALLY VOLUNTEERED TO BE THE PRINCIPAL OF ONMYO ACADEMY WHEN IT WAS FOUNDED.
THE PRINCIPAL DID...?
END OF CHAPTER 55

CHAPTER 56
COMPANY

AFTERSCHOOL, UENO...
I CAN'T BELIEVE...
..WAS A SCHOOLMATE OF MR OTOMO'S...
..THE YAKO DEVOTEE SUZUKA TOLD US ABOUT, RYO SAOTOME..
YEAH..
AFTER HEARING THE STUFF THAT TAKIKO GIRL TOLD US,..
..WE LOOKED INTO THE ACADEMY ARCHIVES AND FOUND A GRADUATE REGISTER
THAT WAS THE ONE THING WE GOT OUT OF WASTING AN ENTIRE SUNDAY.
IF THAT'S WHAT YOU WANTED TO KNOW, I COULD HAVE ASKED GRAND-MOTHER IF YOU HAD SIMPLY CALLED
SORRY, KURA-HASHI.
WE THOUGHT IT WOULD BE DIFFI-CULT TO SEE HER SOON ENOUGH...
..AND WE WANTED TO TALK TO YOU IN PERSON ABOUT IT BEFORE-HAND.
TH-THAT'S OKAY, NATSU-ME!
BLUSH
NATSUME HASN'T NOTICED...

...THE FACT THAT I'VE BEEN ACTING STRANGE LATELY.
MY FIRST LOVE...
...WAS A VERY BOYISH BOY.
BUT...
...SOMETHING ABOUT HIM DOESN'T MATCH THE NATSUME I SAW THEN...
WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO DO?
IS THIS SOUMA GIRL REALLY A STUDENT AT THE ACADEMY?
DIDN'T SHE EVEN KNOW THE PRINCIPAL WAS A FOUNDING MEMBER OF THE YAKO ACADEMY?
IF HER STORY'S TRUE, IT STARTS TO SOUND SIGNIFICANT THAT THE REAL RAVEN'S COAT WAS AT ONMYO ACADEMY.
IT ALL SMELLS REALLY FISHY.
IN FACT...
...IT'S THIS SAOTOME YOU'RE ALL GOING TO ASK YOUR HOMEROOM TEACHER ABOUT ANYWAY, ISN'T IT?
THAT PART BUGS ME A HUNDRED TIMES MORE.
YEAH, BUT EVEN IF THEY WERE IN SCHOOL AT THE SAME TIME, THAT DOESN'T MEAN HE'LL KNOW.
...BUT AS LONG AS WE'RE VISITING HIM ANYWAY...
MEEP MEEEEEP!!
HMM?

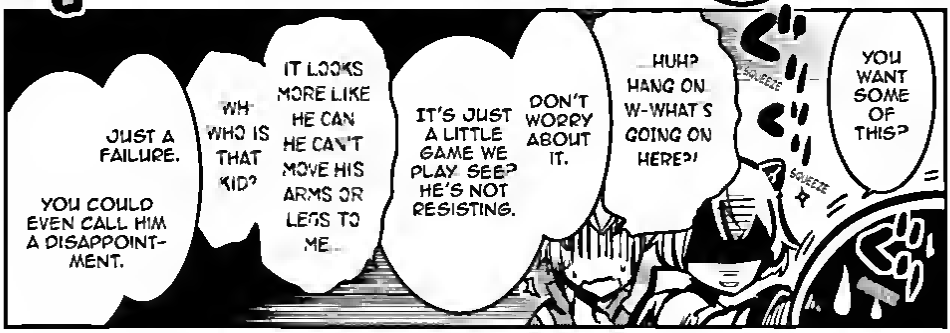
WHRRT
VROOM
TURN
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
HUH? SENIOR?
OH...
DUMB-FOUNDED
THAT'S NOT THE PROB-LEM!
I'LL HAVE HER BACK BY DARK AND I DON'T MIND SLIPPING YOU A LITTLE CASH FOR THE PRIVI-LEGE.
I DON'T NEED THESE JOKES EACH TIME. CAN YOU BE SERIOUS FOR ONCE?
I CAME TO INVITE KON OUT FOR A DRIVE.
I COULD ASK YOU THE SAME. WHAT BRINGS YOU TO UENO?
WOW, THAT'S A SURPRISE. LOOK AT YOU RIDING AROUND IN A CAR.

SO, STARTING FROM THE--
I THINK YOU'VE ALREADY MET TOJI...
I KNOW.
ER... I THINK HER NAME IS SUZU.
HERE, LET ME INTRODUCE YOU GUYS. THIS IS THAT SENIOR I WAS TALKING ABOUT.
FOUR-EYES.
SUZUKA DAIRENJI.
KYOKO KURAHASHI.
NATSUME TSUCHIMIKADO.
GAZE
OH.
This guy's name is Tenma Momoe...
ピタリ
TINK
WHAT ABOUT ME?
U-UM. HARUTORA?
Four-
Eyes
OH, HUH. SO YOU ALREADY KNOW THEM.
WELL, I GUESS EVERYONE IS KIND OF FAMOUS AROUND THE ACADEMY...

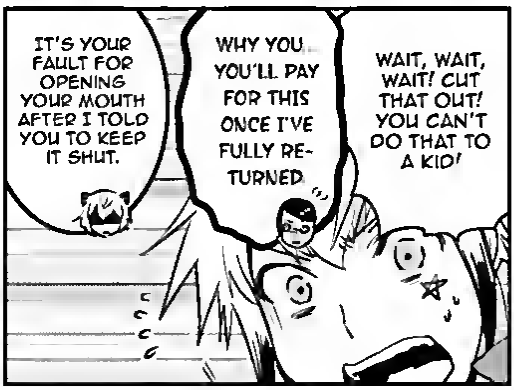
?
STARE
THIS IS THE PROBLEM WITH THOSE WHO ALREADY HAVE THEIRS
YOU KEEP TALKING LIKE YOU LOOK DOWN ON ME, AND I DON'T LIKE IT.
OH, YOU MEAN KON?
UGH, I CAN'T BELIEVE I UNDER-STOOO THAT TOO.
SO CLOSE, YET SO FAR AWAY.
UGH! I ACTUALLY UNDERSTAND WHAT YOU MEANT BY THAT
YOU'VE DRAGGED ME DOWN TO YOUR LEVEL.
YOU COULD AT LEAST LET ME TAKE HER OUT ON A DATE!
WHY ARE YOU SNAPPING AT ME?! I'M NOT GONNA LET YOU TAKE HER ANY-WHERE!
YOU SEEM KIND OF WORSE THAN NORMAL TODAY.
DID SOME-THING UPSET YOU?
LIKE, MAYBE YOU WERE DISAP-POINTED BY SOME-THING...
RMB
YOU DON'T EVEN REALIZE HOW GOOD YOU'VE GOT IT...
THE ENVY...
THE HATRED...

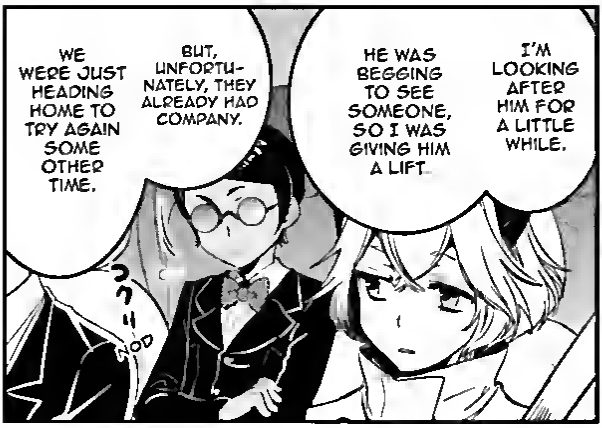
SIZZLE
FWIP
MAN, I'M GETTING NOWHERE WITH YOU. NOT THAT THAT'S NEW...
WHAT IN THE HECK ARE YOU--
WHO THE--
THAT'S A FAMILIAR
JUST AN ORDINARY CHAUFFEUR FAMILIAR
H-
HUH?
THAT VOICE!
?!
WHUMP

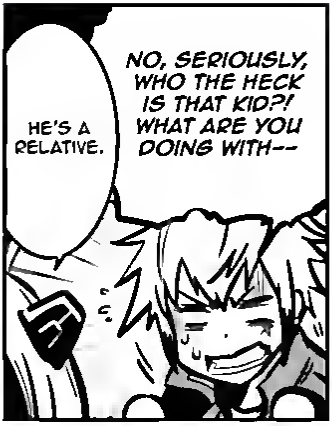
I'M PLEASED TO SEE YOU IN GOOD HEALTH.
IT HAS BEEN A WHILE SINCE--
A KID?
BMPH?!
WHAM
SHADDAP!


JUST A FAILURE.
YOU COULD EVEN CALL HIM A DISAPPOINTMENT.
WH- WHO IS THAT KID?
IT LOOKS MORE LIKE HE CAN HE CAN'T MOVE HIS ARMS OR LEGS TO ME...
IT'S JUST A LITTLE GAME WE PLAY. SEE? HE'S NOT RESISTING.
DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT.
HUH? HANG ON W-WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?!
SQUEEE
SQUEEE
YOU WANT SOME OF THIS?

NO, WAIT. I GET IT.
I'LL KEEP QUIET.
LOOM
THE VERY FACT THAT YOU ARE GIVING ME ORDERS IS AT ISSUE HERE

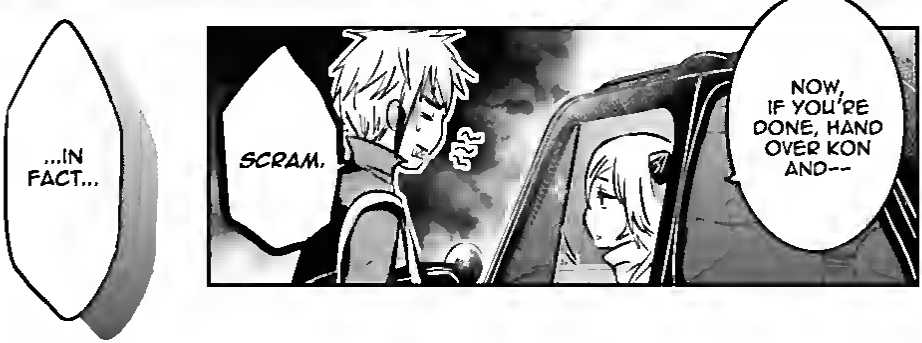

IT'S YOUR FAULT FOR OPENING YOUR MOUTH AFTER I TOLD YOU TO KEEP IT SHUT.
WHY YOU... YOU'LL PAY FOR THIS ONCE I'VE FULLY RETURNED
WAIT, WAIT, WAIT! CUT THAT OUT! YOU CAN'T DO THAT TO A KID!

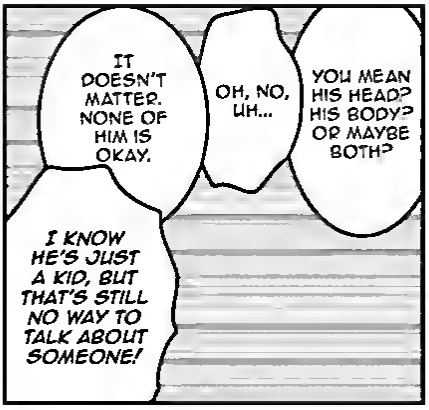

I'M LOOKING AFTER HIM FOR A LITTLE WHILE.
HE WAS BEGGING TO SEE SOMEONE, SO I WAS GIVING HIM A LIFT.
BUT, UNFORTUNATELY, THEY ALREADY HAD COMPANY.
WE WERE JUST HEADING HOME TO TRY AGAIN SOME OTHER TIME.
NOD


HE'S A RELATIVE.
NO, SERIOUSLY, WHO THE HECK IS THAT KID?! WHAT ARE YOU DOING WITH--

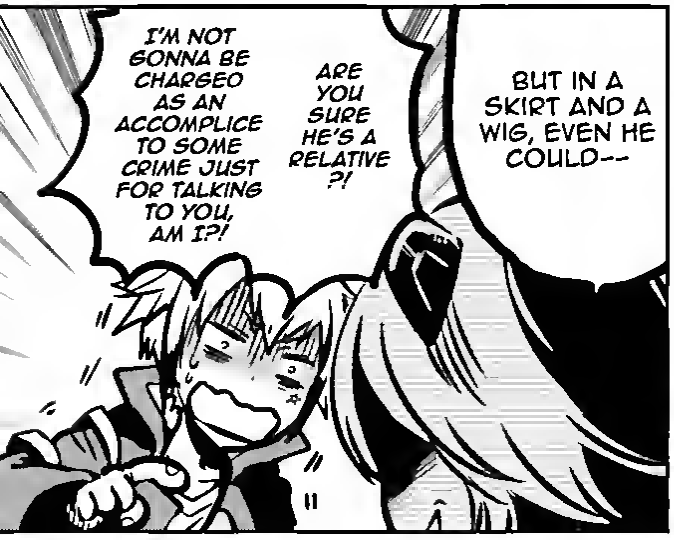
MUTTER
TO BE HONEST...
...I'M A LITTLE RELIEVED.

Huh?
あれ?


...IN FACT...
SCRAM.
NOW, IF YOU'RE DONE, HAND OVER KON AND--


IT DOESN'T MATTER. NONE OF HIM IS OKAY.
OH, NO, UH...
YOU MEAN HIS HEAD? HIS BODY? OR MAYBE BOTH?
I KNOW HE'S JUST A KID, BUT THAT'S STILL NO WAY TO TALK ABOUT SOMEONE!

IS THAT KID OKAY?
He doesn't look so good...


I'M NOT GONNA BE CHARGED AS AN ACCOMPLICE TO SOME CRIME JUST FOR TALKING TO YOU, AM I?!
ARE YOU SURE HE'S A RELATIVE?!
BUT IN A SKIRT AND A WIG, EVEN HE COULD--

I'VE GOT NO IDEA WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT.
DON'T WORRY. NOT OKAY IS OKAY WHEN IT COMES TO THIS KID.

WELL, GOTTA GO.
EVERY-THING YOU DO SEEMS SO DIS-JOINTED.

STARE

SUZU.

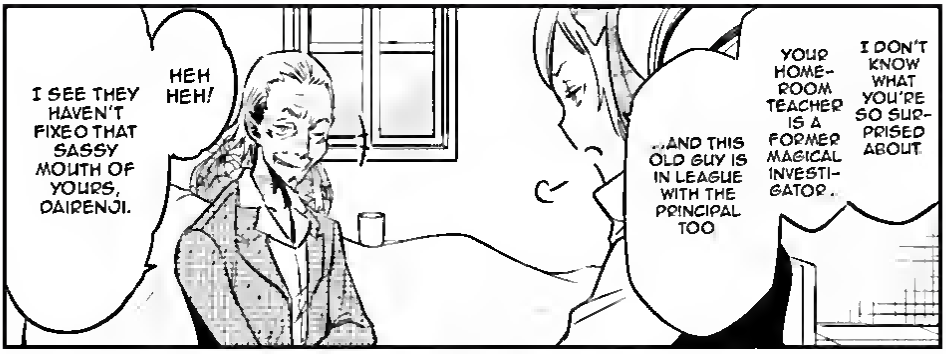
FAREWELL TO YOU, KID--
WHAP!
BMPH ?!
VWOOOOOM
Huh?
WHAT JUST HAP-PENED?
HUH?
VROOOOM
HUNTING THE TWIN HORN SYNDICATE?
医院

WE CAN'T AFFORD TO LET THIS CHANCE SLIP BY.
WE'LL TAKE THEM ALL OUT...
...INCLUDING THEIR INNER RANKS, WHICH IS WHAT WE'RE REALLY AFTER.
LUCKILY FOR US, A CERTAIN MAGIC TEACHER SEALED THEIR "JOKER."
THAT'S RIGHT.
CHIEF?
...BECAUSE, IN ALL LIKELIHOOD, THIS WILL BE MY FINAL JOB.
I'LL SMOKE OUT EVERY LAST ONE OF THEM.
I'VE ALSO ADVANCED THE INTERNAL INVESTIGATION WITHIN THE ONMYO AGENCY.
NOW...
...WOULD INTERFERE WITH MY COMFORTABLE RETIREMENT
LEAVING ANY UNWANTED BAGGAGE IN THE NEW SYSTEM...

THAT'S WHAT I CAME TO TELL YOU.
SO I WANT YOU TO STAY IN BED.
THIS TIME, WE WILL SEND THEM AN ACTUAL BODYGUARD FROM THE ONMYO AGENCY.
THE CHANCES THE SPARKS KICKED UP BY THIS LITTLE CONFLICT COULD ONCE AGAINST FALL UPON YOUR STUDENTS ARE HIGHER THAN ZERO.
BUT...
WELL, WHAT I WANTED TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT TODAY INVOLVES THIS HORN HUNT.
PUNISHED?
What the heck did he do?
OH, THAT?
I'D LOVE TO SEND KOSURE, BUT WE NEED HIM IN THE FIELD.
PLUS, HE'S STILL BEING PUNISHED.
Another "trustworthy" magical investigator?
A BODYGUARD? WHO ARE YOU SENDING?
.....
不信
DISTRUST
..TOOK A GROUP OF HIS SUBORDINATES, AND DESERTED US IN OUR MOMENT OF NEED.
THE PUNK ABANDONED HIS DUTIES IN THE MIDST OF THE ATTACK ON THE AGENCY...

TWITCH
I CAN'T POSSIBLY IMAGINE WHO SWINDLED HIM INTO DOING THAT.
EXPECTING GUESTS?
BOY, IT TOOK FOREVER TO FIND THE PLACE.
I DIDN'T EVEN REALIZE THIS WAS A HOSPITAL.
IT LOOKS LIKE SOMEBODY'S HOUSE...
YOU THINK THE PRINCIPAL CHEAPED OUT ON THE BILL?
HEY, MY GRANDMOTHER MAY BE CHEAP, BUT SHE WOULDN'T SKIMP ON MEDICAL CARE!
YES, THIS PLACE IS VERY STABLE SPIRITUALLY.
LOOK, CAN WE JUST HURRY THIS UP?
BLAH
THUNK
G-GUYS, DO YOU THINK YOU CAN BE A LITTLE QUIETER?
OH, YOU THINK THIS IS IT?
WE STOPPED BY FOR A VISIT, MR. OTOMO!

HEY THERE.
HE'S GOT COMPANY?
OH, HELLO.
IT'S BEEN A WHILE SINCE I'VE SEEN KYOKO AND MISS DAIRENJI
AND I BELIEVE THIS IS MY FIRST TIME MEETING YOU OTHERS
Ugh!
MR. AMAMI!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE, SIR?
YOU KNOW HIM, KYOKO?
YES, HE'S THE HEAD OF THE MAGICAL INVESTIGATION DIVISION
HEAD OF THE MAGICAL INVESTIGATION DIVISION?!
THEN HE'S ONE OF THE HEADS OF THE ONMYO AGENCY?!
Holy cow!!
NOW, NOW. JUST RELAX.
I'VE HEARD ALL ABOUT YOU KIDS.
I'M AMAMI OF THE MAGICAL INVESTIGATION DIVISION
NICE TO MEET YOU.
TH-THE PLEASURE'S ALL MINE...
B-BUT WHAT ARE YOU...
DON'T BE AN IDIOT.


I SEE THEY HAVEN'T FIXED THAT SASSY MOUTH OF YOURS, DAIRENJI.
HEH HEH!
...AND THIS OLD GUY IS IN LEAGUE WITH THE PRINCIPAL TOO
YOUR HOMEROOM TEACHER IS A FORMER MAGICAL INVESTIGATOR.
I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE SO SURPRISED ABOUT.

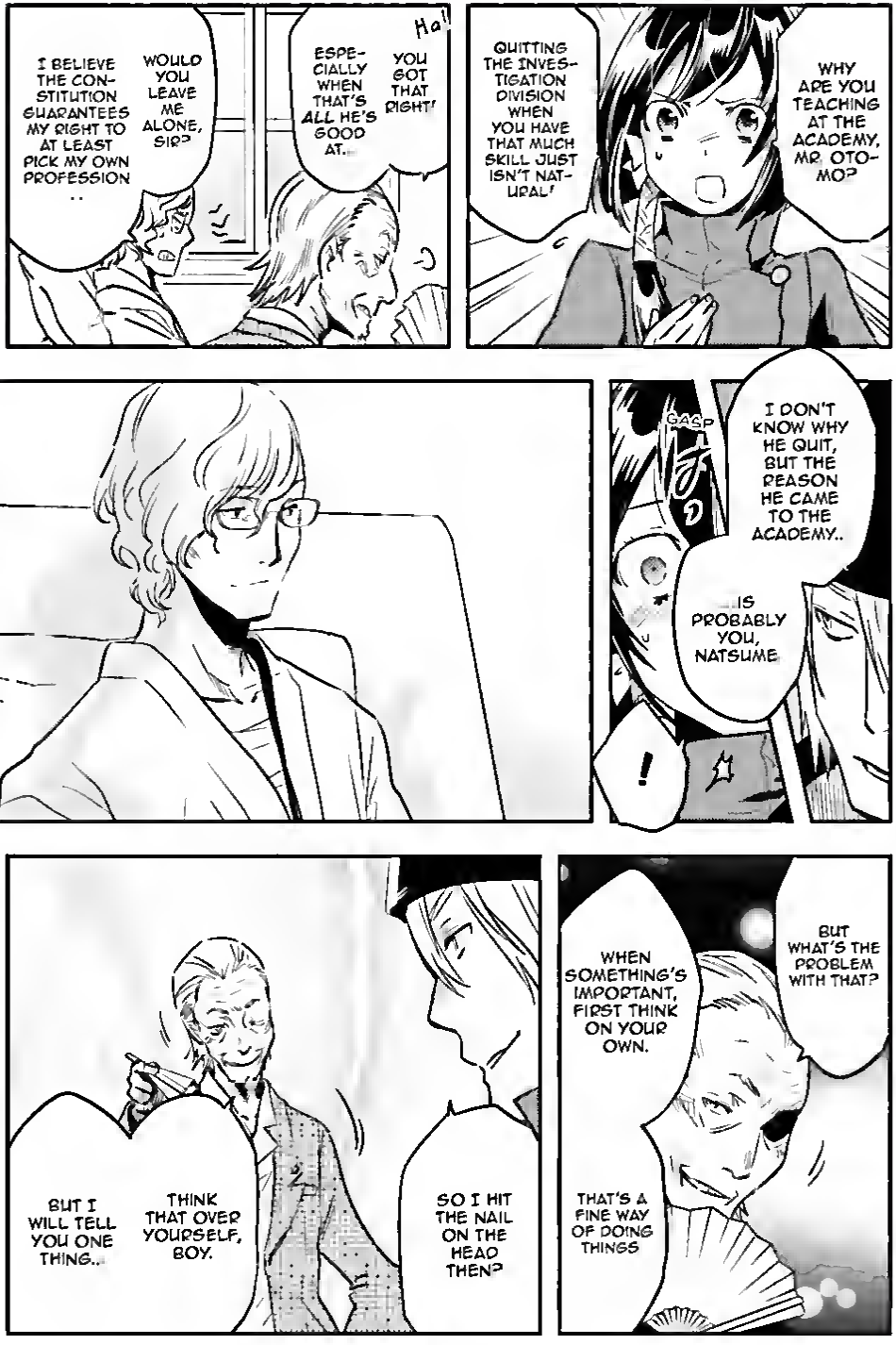
IN FACT...
THIS JUST CONFIRMS SOMETHING.
WHAT A JOKE.
STOP WANDERING AROUND ALL OVER THE PLACE AND DO YOUR FRIGGIN' JOB.
Shoo! Shoo!
I'M GLAD YOU'RE DOING WELL.
I'D LOVE TO SIT IN ON ONE OF YOUR CLASSES SOMETIME.
BUT I THOUGHT I HEARD YOU WERE PLAYING THE SWEET SCHOOL IDOL AT THE ACADEMY?

...FOUGHT BLOW FOR BLOW WITH DOMAN ASHIYA, AND FINALLY ENDED THE BATTLE USING AN INDEPENDENT EXORCIST.
...CONTROLLED MAGIC OLDER THAN EVEN THE IMPERIAL SYSTEM...
INTO THE IDENTITY OF THE SO-CALLED "TEACHER"...
...WHO EASILY HACKED MY SEAL...
H-HEY, SUZUKA?
I'M NOT AN IDIOT, OKAY?
AFTER THAT WHOLE INCIDENT, I LOOKED INTO SOME THINGS.

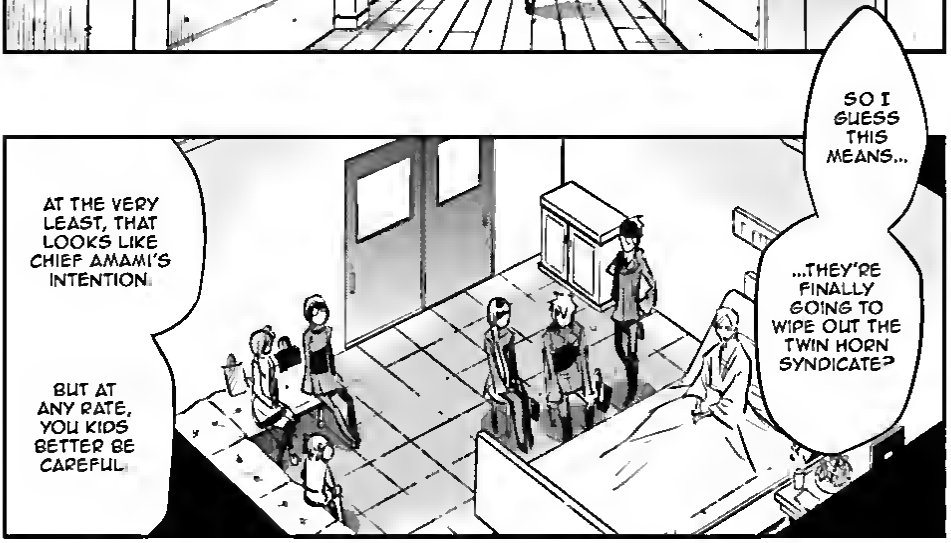
THE HEAD OF THE MAGICAL INVESTIGATION DIVISION "THE DIVINE FAN" AMAMI'S RIGHT-HAND-MAN...
...AND THE MAGICAL INVESTIGATOR WHO ACTED IN SECRET AS ONE OF THE TWELVE DIVINE GENERALS...
"SHADOW."
I HAD HEARD THE RUMORS...
...BUT I NEVER COULD HAVE IMAGINED HE WAS A TEACHER NOW.
THESE KIDS SAW YOU HAVING IT OUT WITH DOMAN ASHIYA, DIDN'T THEY?
THEN, THERE'S NO WAY WE CAN HIDE IT FROM THEM FOREVER.
CASUALLY...
HUH? WHY, WHATEVER DO YOU--
CHIEF?!
BOY, SHE REALLY GOT US ON THIS ONE, BUDDY.
...IT WAS "KUROKO." JUST "KUROKO."
OH, BY THE WAY, THE REAL NAME ISN'T ALL SNOOTY LIKE "SHADOW"...
...I THINK CALLING YOURSELF "THE DIVINE FAN" IS A LOT SNOOTIER.
PLEASE JUST GIVE ME A BREAK ALREADY... SHEESH...

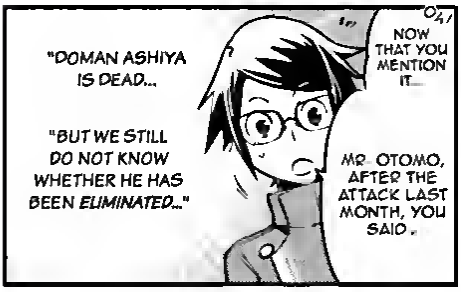
A "kuroko" is a stagehand who dresses entirely in black to blend into the black background / or someone who's (figuratively) pulling the strings behind the scenes

NOD
NOD
NOD
Let the secret slip and it's off to the slammer.
OH, BUT THIS IS, OF COURSE, TOP SECRET, KIDS. YOU'RE STILL BOUND BY PROFESSIONAL SECRECY.
THEN... MR. OTOMO IS...
...A FORMER MEMBER OF THE TWELVE DIVINE GENERALS?!
YES, BUT EVEN THOUGH THEY'RE THE TOP STATE ONMYOJI, THEY COME IN ALL SHAPES AND SIZES.
THEY RANGE FROM SNARKY, INSENSITIVE OLD MEN TRYING TO ACT HALF THEIR AGE...
...TO CONTRARY GIRLS AT THE HEIGHT OF PUBERTY WHO ARE ALL TALK.
WHAT DID YOU SAY?! WHO'S TRYING TO ACT HALF HIS AGE?!
HUH?! WHO'S AT THE HEIGHT OF PUBERTY?!
GLANCE
GULP
THESE THREE ARE ALL DIVINE GENERALS!
B-BUT...

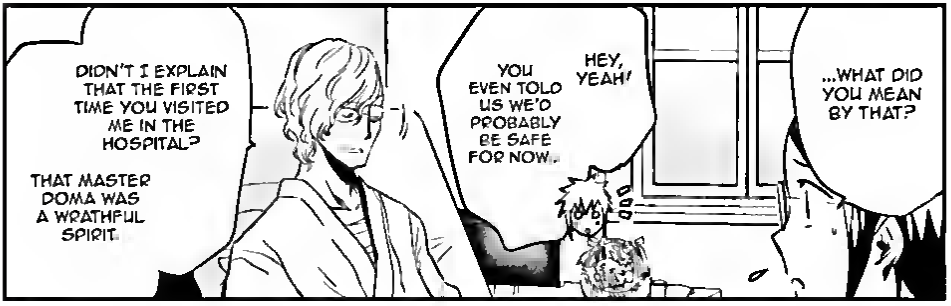

I BELIEVE THE CONSTITUTION GUARANTEES MY RIGHT TO AT LEAST PICK MY OWN PROFESSION..
WOULD YOU LEAVE ME ALONE, SIR?
ESPECIALLY WHEN THAT'S ALL HE'S GOOD AT..
Ha!
YOU GOT THAT RIGHT!
QUITTING THE INVESTIGATION DIVISION WHEN YOU HAVE THAT MUCH SKILL JUST ISN'T NATURAL!
WHY ARE YOU TEACHING AT THE ACADEMY, MR. OTOMO?
GASP
I DON'T KNOW WHY HE QUIT, BUT THE REASON HE CAME TO THE ACADEMY..
...IS PROBABLY YOU, NATSUME.
!
BUT I WILL TELL YOU ONE THING..
THINK THAT OVER YOURSELF, BOY.
SO I HIT THE NAIL ON THE HEAD THEN?
BUT WHAT'S THE PROBLEM WITH THAT?
WHEN SOMETHING'S IMPORTANT, FIRST THINK ON YOUR OWN.
THAT'S A FINE WAY OF DOING THINGS

ALL THE ADULTS IN THIS WORLD ARE A BUNCH OF SCOUNDRELS.
NOW..
I THINK I'VE BEEN HERE LONG ENOUGH.
THUNK
OTOMO, YOU TELL THEM WHAT WE WERE DISCUSSING BEFORE.
I DON'T THINK I'LL BE ABLE TO CONTACT YOU FOR A WHILE, BUT JUST KEEP THAT IN MIND.
IF YOU GO AROUND TAKING EVERYTHING THEY TELL YOU AT FACE VALUE, YOU'LL NEVER GROW UP.
BE CAREFUL, SIR.
OH, KNOCK IT OFF.
HEARING WORDS OF ENCOURAGE-MENT FROM YOU MAKES MY BUTT ITCH.
FWIP
GIVE MY REGARDS TO MIYO.

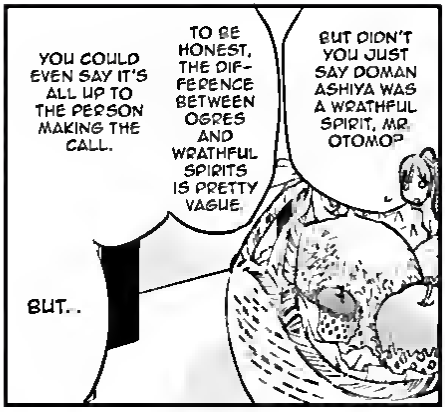

SO I GUESS THIS MEANS...
...THEY'RE FINALLY GOING TO WIPE OUT THE TWIN HORN SYNDICATE?
AT THE VERY LEAST, THAT LOOKS LIKE CHIEF AMAMI'S INTENTION.
BUT AT ANY RATE, YOU KIDS BETTER BE CAREFUL.


041
NOW THAT YOU MENTION IT...
MR. OTOMO, AFTER THE ATTACK LAST MONTH, YOU SAID...
"DOMAN ASHIYA IS DEAD...
"BUT WE STILL DO NOT KNOW WHETHER HE HAS BEEN *ELIMINATED*..."

APPARENTLY, THEY'RE GONNA ASSIGN YOU A BODYGUARD FROM THE AGENCY.
...BUT I WANT YOU TO WATCH YOUR-SELVES AS WELL.

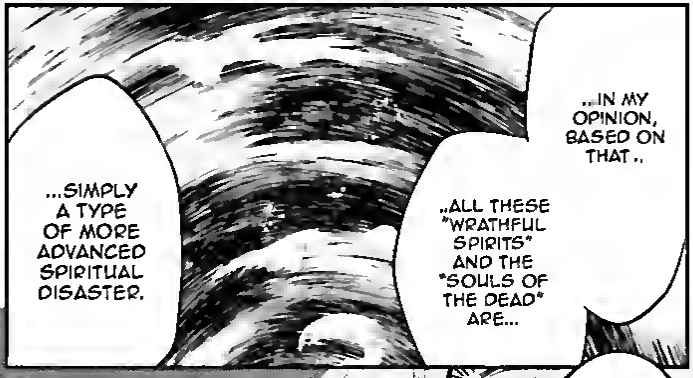

...WHAT DID YOU MEAN BY THAT?
HEY, YEAH!
YOU EVEN TOLD US WE'D PROBABLY BE SAFE FOR NOW...
DIDN'T I EXPLAIN THAT THE FIRST TIME YOU VISITED ME IN THE HOSPITAL?
THAT MASTER DOMA WAS A WRATHFUL SPIRIT.

TO BE HONEST, I'VE GOT NO IDEA WHAT YOU'RE SAYING.
YOU MEAN... WHAT EXACTLY?
THAT DOMAN ASHIYA WAS A SPIRITUAL DISASTER?
SOMETHING LIKE THE NUE WE'VE FOUGHT?
SOMETHING STUPID LIKE, HE WAS A PHASE THREE THAT JUST HAPPENED TO BE SHAPED LIKE A HUMAN?
HEY, SEEMS LIKE YOU DO GET IT, HARUTORA
THAT'S EXACTLY RIGHT.
HUH?
TWITCH
!
...BUT A "TYPE OGRE,"
TO BE ACCURATE THOUGH, HE WASN'T A "TYPE CHIMERA" LIKE THE NUE...
IN TOJI'S CASE, HE'S JUST GOT A FRAGMENT OF A DISASTER..
...BUT TRUE TYPE OGRES ARE SPIRITUAL DISASTERS STABILIZED AROUND A HUMAN CORE.
THE DISASTER FUSES WITH THE SPIRIT PRESENCE OF THE HUMAN IT USES AS A CORE.
...AND IT IS BELIEVED THAT EVEN AFTER THEIR BODY ROTS AWAY, THE HUMAN'S MIND REMAINS.


BUT DIDN'T YOU JUST SAY DOMAN ASHIYA WAS A WRATHFUL SPIRIT, MR. OTOMO?
TO BE HONEST, THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN OGRES AND WRATHFUL SPIRITS IS PRETTY VAGUE.
YOU COULD EVEN SAY IT'S ALL UP TO THE PERSON MAKING THE CALL.
BUT..

TH-THEIR HUMAN MIND?
THAT'S RIGHT.
THAT'S AN "OGRE."

EVEN THE HONOR'S STUDENTS DON'T UNDERSTAND
?


...IN MY OPINION, BASED ON THAT..
..ALL THESE "WRATHFUL SPIRITS" AND THE "SOULS OF THE DEAD" ARE...
...SIMPLY A TYPE OF MORE ADVANCED SPIRITUAL DISASTER.

ぽか
A...
...GOD?
DUMBFOUNDED
I'M SURE YOU'VE HEARD ABOUT IT BEFORE, SUZUKA.

...IT BECOMES A GOD.

THERE IS A THEORY THAT ONCE A SPIRITUAL DISASTER REACHES ITS PEAK...

IT'S THE "PHASE 5" THAT OCCASIONALLY COMES UP IN RESEARCH CIRCLES ..
...AKA THE "FINAL PHASE."
WELL, OF COURSE I KNOW ABOUT IT.
THE ONE WHO PROPOSED THE THEORY WAS MY FATHER.
CHATTER
WHAT?
THAT WAS ONE OF PROFESSOR SHIDO DAIRENJI'S THEORIES?
M-MR. OTOMO...
I'M SORRY, BUT I'M REALLY DUMB.
I'M AFRAID I DON'T QUITE GET WHATEVER THE CONCLUSION OF ALL THIS IS..
AH, WELL...
I THINK MASTER DOMA WAS A PRETTY DARN SPECIAL TYPE OF DISASTER.
IN ALL LIKELIHOOD, HE BOUND HIMSELF TO A HUMAN BODY HE USED AS AN EFFIGY...
..AND, FROM A PHASE THREE, STOPPED HIMSELF AT PHASE FOUR IN ORDER TO STAY IN THE PRESENT WORLD.
PROBABLY FUELED BY...
...AN ATTACHMENT TO HIS MAGIC

IF THAT MASTER DOMA...
...THE DISASTER KNOWN AS "D," REALLY WAS REINCARNATED FROM DOMAN ASHIYA...
...THEN THAT WRATHFUL SPIRIT HAS, NO JOKE, PERSISTED...
...BY USING HUMAN BODIES AS EFFIGIES SINCE THE HEIAN PERIOD FOR THESE PAST THOUSAND YEARS.
THOU-SAND?
OBVIOUSLY, HE SWITCHED BODIES ONE AFTER ANOTHER.
SO WHAT I'M TRYING TO SAY IS...
...THOUGH THE EFFIGIES DIED...
...IT IS UNKNOWN WHETHER THE SPIRITUAL DISASTER ITSELF WAS DESTROYED.
AND EVEN IF THE DISASTER ITSELF IS STILL FINE, WE'LL BE FINE FOR THE TIME BEING UNTIL IT TAKES HOLD OF ITS NEXT EFFIGY.
BUT...
...IF HE PREPARED A CORPSE OR SOME-THING TO BE HIS NEW EFFIGY IN ADVANCE...
...HIS REVIVAL COULD TAKE PLACE VERY SOON.
.....
SILENCE
HEY..

HAVEN'T YOU ALL FORGOTTEN...
...WHAT WE CAME FOR IN THE FIRST PLACE?
IN THE END...
THE FOLLOWING DAY, ONMYO AGENCY EXORCISM BUREAU, MEGURO BRANCH...
...IT TURNED OUT MR. OTOMO DIDN'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT THE YAKO ACADEMY OR TAKIKO SOUMA.
BUT...
MURMUR
...WHEN WE ASKED HIM ABOUT RYO SAOTOME, HE, SURPRISINGLY, LOOKED STARTLED.
THE ONE PIECE OF INFORMATION HE TOLD US, WITH A RATHER WEAK LOOK ON HIS FACE, WAS...
MURMUR
AHAHA...
YOU KIDS HAVE ONE LITTLE THING WRONG...

IT'S...
..."SUZU."
IT'S WRITTEN WITH THE CHARACTERS FOR "RYO SAOTOME"...
...BUT IT'S PRONOUNCED "SUZU SAO-TOMOE."
I THINK SHE EVEN WROTE IT PHONETICALLY TO AVOID MISTAKES.
BE CAREFUL.
YOU WON'T BE ABLE TO GO AGAINST HER WITH ORDINARY METHODS.
SUZU...
BLAH
BLAH
MURMUR
MURMUR

AND THAT KID...
THE WAY HE SPOKE...
WASN'T THAT SENIOR'S NAME "SUZU" TOO?
SPACED-OUT...
GUYS..
THE TEACHER'S HERE
AHHH..
NO, NO. I'M OVER-THINKING IT. THAT'S ALL...
SHAKE
SHAKE
SHAKE
THUNK

FWIP
JINGLE
JINGLE
SHK
WHA?!
REJOICE, BRATS.
YOU'RE GETTING THE SUPER VIP TREAT-MENT.

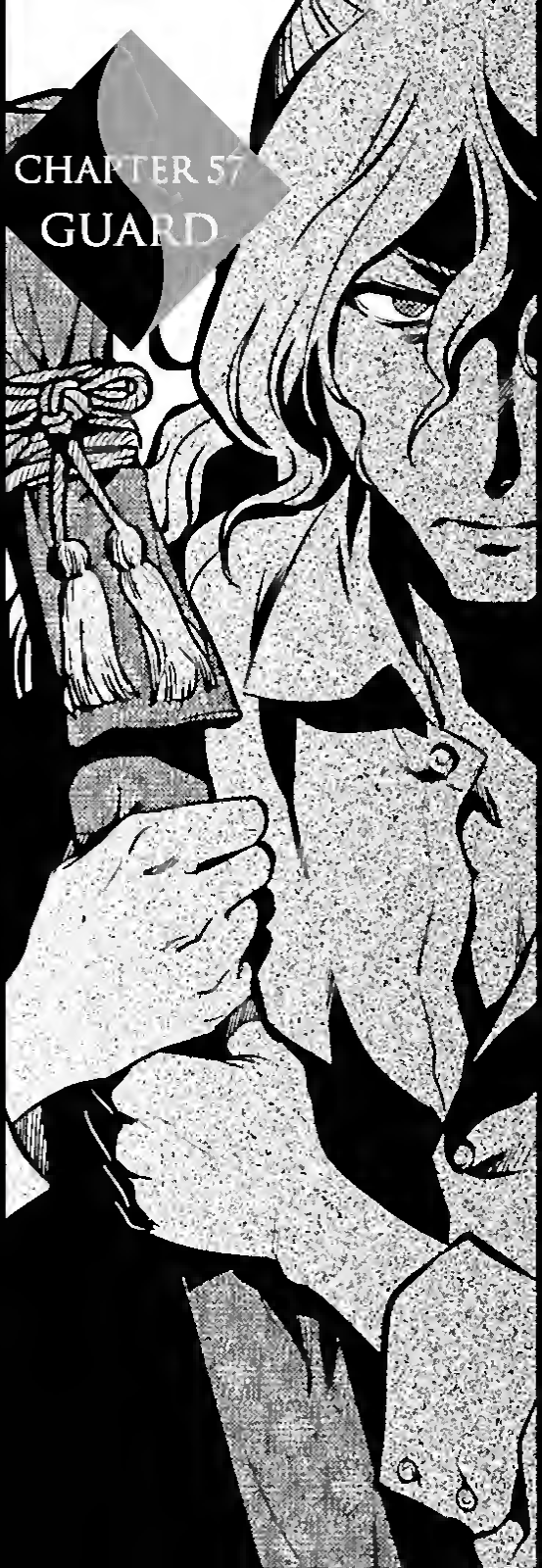
...THE MAGICAL INVESTIGATION DIVISION COMMENCED ITS TWIN HORN SYNDICATE ELIMINATION OPERATION...

AND AT JUST THE SAME TIME...

END OF CHAPTER 56

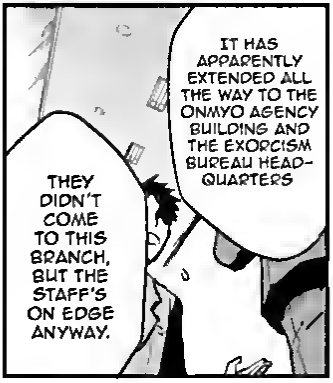
MAGICAL INVESTIGATION DIVISION HQ
WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THIS, SIR?
HOW COULD YOU POSSIBLY THINK THAT ASSIGNING KAGAMI... I MEAN, "OGRE EATER" TO BE NATSUME TSUCHIMIKADO'S BODYGUARD WAS A GOOD IDEA?!
I COULDN'T HELP IT.
THE GUY VOLUNTEERED PERSONALLY.
I DON'T KNOW WHAT REASON HE MAY HAVE HAD...
...AND KOGURE WAS AGAINST IT...
HEY, IT GAVE ME A HEADACHE TO DO IT TOO.
THAT'S JUST ONE MORE SOURCE OF TROUBLE TO WORRY ABOUT...
IF A CERTAIN SOMEONE WERE TO FIND OUT ABOUT THIS...
...I MIGHT BE CURSED TO DEATH FROM HIS HOSPITAL BED.
RMB
KONK
.....
...BUT, IN THE END, IT WAS SETTLED WITH ONE WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR.

AS YOU REPORTED, THERE HAVE ALREADY BEEN MOVEMENTS INSIDE THE AGENCY
THE NEXT FEW HOURS ARE CRITICAL.
IF IT WORRIES YOU, THEN ALL YOU CAN DO IS FINISH THINGS ON OUR END AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE.
AT ANY RATE, IT'S ALL BEEN DECIDED NOW.
KAGAMI'S ALREADY LEFT ON HIS MISSION.
FWIP
EX-CUSE ME, SIR.
.....
FOR NOW, CONCENTRATE ON THE MISSION AT HAND.

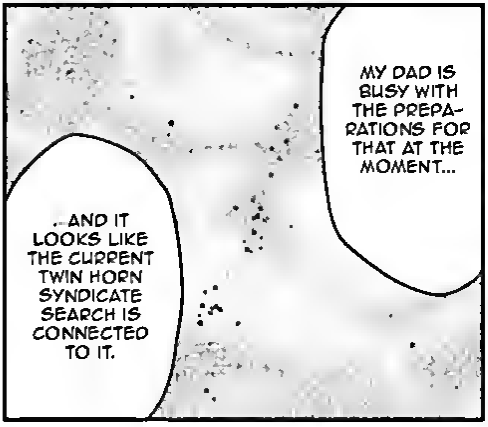

CHAPTER 57
GUARD

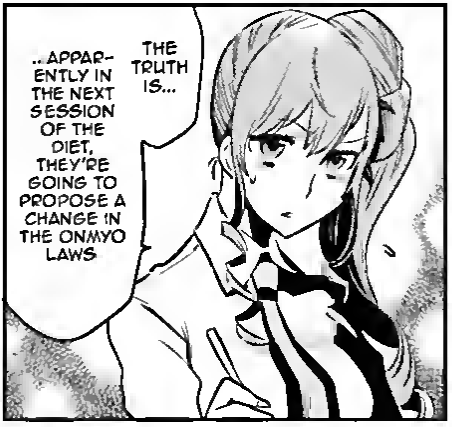
MAN...
EXORCISM BUREAU MEGURO BRANCH
LUNCH BREAK
THIS GUY LOOKS LIKE A SULKING KID.
チラ…
GLANCE
STARE
THAT MONITOR FAMILIAR..
"SHAVER," WAS IT?
HE REALLY DOESN'T LOOK LIKE HE'S KAGAMI'S FAMILIAR, DOES HE?
BUT..
...WHEN I EMAILED SUZUKA JUST NOW...
STARE
YOU MORON! YOU BUFFOON! WHAT ARE YOU, BLIND?!

I DON'T CARE WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE, BE ON YOUR GUARD AROUND IT!
I'VE HEARD SHAVER IS A FAMILIAR SO DANGEROUS THE AGENCY PROHIBITED KAGAMI FROM USING IT.
GULP !!


IT HAS APPARENTLY EXTENDED ALL THE WAY TO THE ONMYO AGENCY BUILDING AND THE EXORCISM BUREAU HEADQUARTERS
THEY DIDN'T COME TO THIS BRANCH, BUT THE STAFF'S ON EDGE ANYWAY.

BOY, IT'S BEEN AWFULLY TENSE AROUND HERE TODAY, HASN'T IT?
YES.
THIS INVESTIGATION IS SOMETHING ON A SCALE I'VE NEVER SEEN BEFORE.


MY DAD IS BUSY WITH THE PREPARATIONS FOR THAT AT THE MOMENT...
..AND IT LOOKS LIKE THE CURRENT TWIN HORN SYNDICATE SEARCH IS CONNECTED TO IT.


THE TRUTH IS...
..APPARENTLY IN THE NEXT SESSION OF THE DIET, THEY'RE GOING TO PROPOSE A CHANGE IN THE ONMYO LAWS

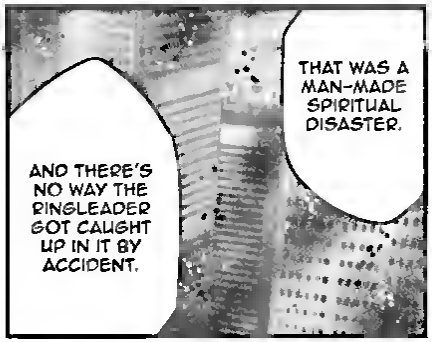
THIS CHANGE IN LAW IS APPARENTLY IN ANTICIPATION OF AN EXPANSION OF THE ONMYO AGENCY...
...AND THEY WANT TO CLEAN OUT THE ORGANIZATION BEFOREHAND..
SO, IT'S LIKE SOME KIND OF PURGE?
THE WHOLE THING SEEMS...
...PRETTY SCARY.
SLURP
UDON
BUT THAT FAMILIAR ...
...IS PRETTY CREEPY.
STARE
YEAH, BUT IT'S STILL A LITTLE BETTER THAN HAVING ITS MASTER TAILING US ALL DAY.
WHOA!
FLOP
SHWIP
ARE YOU OKAY?
WHAT THE HECK ARE YOU DOING?
SORRY, SORRY.
I'M GONNA GET A NEW SET OF CHOPSTICKS FROM THE CAFETERIA
CAFETERIA
MURMUR
MURMUR
WHRR WHRR

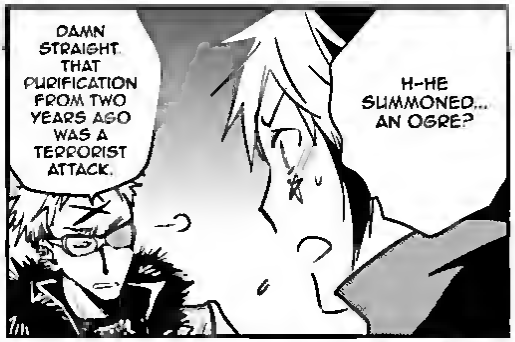
MURMUR
MURMUR
MURMUR
!
YO.
IS THAT ANY WAY TO ACT TOWARDS AN ELDER WHO CAME ALL THE WAY OUT HERE TO BE YOUR BODYGUARD?
Sit down.
HUH?
WHAT DO YOU WANT?
MURMUR
MURMUR
SLAM
COME 'ERE FOR A MINUTE! WE NEED TO TALK
HARUTORA! DON'T YOU IGNORE ME!
FWIP
.....
THAT'S WHERE YOU'RE WRONG. I'VE VERY INTERESTED IN YOU BRATS.
LISTEN TO THE MOUTH ON THIS GUY!
HEH HEH!
THUNK
PLUS, I THOUGHT YOU HAD NO INTEREST IN US KIDS.
I DION'T ASK FOR IT. I DON'T WANT ANYTHING TO DO WITH YOU.

HUH?
HA! YOU HAVEN'T EVEN REALIZED IT YOURSELF.
WHY DO YOU THINK THE ONMYO AGENCY SUPPLIED A BODYGUARD FOR A BUNCH OF STUDENTS?
YOU KIDS ARE TOO WILD A COLLECTION TO IGNORE.
THERE'S A POTENTIAL REINCARNATION OF YAKO TSUCHIMIKADO...
A HALF-OGRE WITH ONE HELL OF A BACKSTORY...
AND THEN THERE'S THAT GOTH LOLI DAIRENJI GIRL...
THAT LITTLE BRAT BROKE THE LAWS OF ONMYO
WHAT THE HELL IS SHE DOING AT THE ONMYO ACADEMY?

THAT GOES FOR THAT TOJI ATO TOO.
UGH...
W-WELL...
HOW GULLIBLE DO YOU HAVE TO BE TO BELIEVE THAT?
YOU THINK THEY'D JUST TOSS HER IN WITH THE POTENTIAL REINCARNATION OF YAKO?
THE RINGLEADER OF THE TWIN HORN SYNDICATE
THAT GIRL IS THE DAUGHTER OF SHIDO DAIRENJI ...
THAT'S JUST THEIR COVER STORY.
DON'T BE STUPID
BECAUSE THAT'S HER PENALTY FOR--
MURMUR
MURMUR
BLAH BLAH

HE ISN'T JUST SOME ORDINARY HALF-OGRE.
THE OGRE INHABITING THAT KID WAS SUMMONED BY SHIDO DAIRENJI HIMSELF.
JUST THINK ABOUT IT. WOULD YOU NORMALLY LEAVE A KID INFESTED WITH ONE OF THOSE RIGHT NEXT TO NATSUME TSUCHI-MIKADO...
WITHOUT EVEN BOTHERING TO INVESTIGATE IT A LITTLE?


THAT WAS A MAN-MADE SPIRITUAL DISASTER.
AND THERE'S NO WAY THE RINGLEADER GOT CAUGHT UP IN IT BY ACCIDENT.


H-HE SUMMONED... AN OGRE?
DAMN STRAIGHT. THAT PURIFICATION FROM TWO YEARS AGO WAS A TERRORIST ATTACK.

I'M TELLING YOU...
...IT WAS A POSSES-SION.
...P...
POSSES-SION?
ANYWAY...

EVERYONE AROUND YOU IS AN "IRREGULAR."
ANYONE WITH AN EYE FOR THIS STUFF HAS THEIR ANTENNAS POINTED IN YOUR DIRECTION.
JUST LIKE "D."
I MEAN, THE CHIEF EVEN HAS HIS DAUGHTER WATCHING YOU.
Y-YOU MEAN KYOKO?!
SHE'S NOT KEEPING TABS ON--
Ha!
I'M TALKING ABOUT REALITY HERE, KID.
YOU THINK SHE'S JUST A FRIEND?
THIS GUY'S TRYING TO SAY KYOKO'S A SPY?
CLENCH
DAMN IT, CALM DOWN.
HEY...
WHAT IS IT YOU WANT?
YOU DIDN'T STOP ME JUST TO CHITCHAT, DID YOU?
.....
IT'S ABOUT OTOMO.

EVEN INSIDE THE ONMYO AGENCY...
...THEY'RE SAYING IT WAS KOGURE THAT TOOK DOWN "D."
BUT... KOGURE COULDN'T QUITE HAVE MADE IT IN TIME.
SOMEONE HAD TO STALL "D" LONG ENOUGH FOR HIM TO GET THERE
AND THAT CAN'T BE ANYONE BUT OTOMO.
!
OH...
SO HE KNOWS TOO.
HE KNOWS MR. OTOMO IS A FORMER MEMBER OF THE TWELVE DIVINE GENERALS.
FIRST, I JUST WANT TO CONFIRM SOME-THING.
IS HE ALIVE?
.....
OF COURSE HE'S ALIVE.
HE'S JUST FINE.
Ha!
YOU CALL THAT "JUST FINE"?
THAT'S AN AWFUL COLD WAY TO TALK ABOUT SOMEONE WHO SAVED YOUR LIFE, HARUTORA.
RARGH!
IF YOU KNOW THE ANSWER, DON'T ASK THE QUESTION!
QUIT MAKING FUN OF ME ALL THE TIME!
?
.....

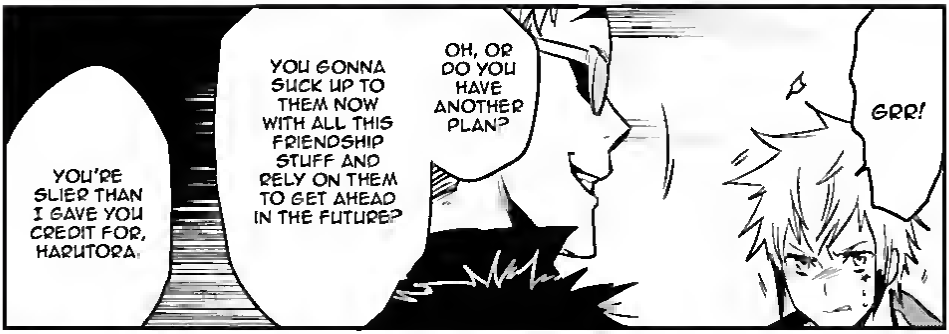
HE...
...TRICKED ME INTO REVEALING IT?!
!
WILL YOU TELL ME WHAT HAPPENED?
BLUSH
SO THE DAMAGE REALLY WAS MAJOR
...HUH.
HUH?
I WANT TO KNOW WHAT HAPPENED..
..IN THE MAGIC BATTLE BETWEEN HIM AND "D"
ALL OF IT.
I CAN BEAT IT OUT OF YOU IF YOU'D PREFER?
HUH?
WHOOSH
KON! STOP!
HEH.
FWISH

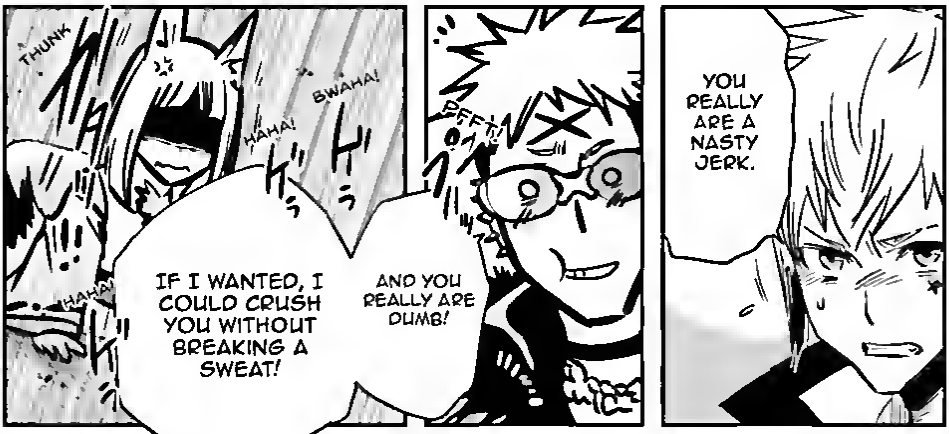
GASP
A BARRIER?!
WHEN DID HE PUT UP A BARRIER?
IF I DIDN'T HAVE A BARRIER UP...
...SHAVER WOULD BE MERRILY MAKING HIS WAY HERE RIGHT ABOUT NOW.
エモノ♪
Prey!
Prey to Hunt!
THAT'S A NICE DEFENSE FAMILIAR YOU GOT THERE, HARUTORA.
YOU'RE ONE LUCKY GUY.
HOW THIS MONSTER KNOWN AS "D," DOMAN ASHIYA'S SPIRIT...
...AND OTOMO FOUGHT.
DON'T READ TOO MUCH INTO IT.
I JUST WANT TO KNOW WHAT HAPPENED. THAT'S ALL.
!
YOU WERE THERE. I BET YOU KNOW HOW I FEEL.
...WHAT I COULD UNDERSTAND.
I CAN ONLY TELL YOU...

I SURPRISED EVEN MYSELF.
AND THEN?!
DON'T BE STUPID! THAT WAS OBVIOUSLY A FEINT!
WHAT? BAMBOO LEAVES?
THAT'S THE NET QUELLING CURSE!
I DIDN'T WANT TO DO IT AT FIRST...
YOU KNOW IT?
DAMN IT! ONLY THE NAME, YOU PIECE OF CRAP!
I'M PRETTY SURE IT WAS A SHINTO SPELL FROM THE RECORDS OF ANCIENT MATTERS.
SO? HOW'D ODMAN ASHIYA...
COUNTER THAT?
DUDE, I DON'T KNOW!
HE JUST SMILED AND--
...BUT I CAN'T BELIEVE HOW WORKED UP BOTH OF US GOT...
...ONCE WE STARTED DISCUSSING THAT BATTLE.
TSK!
THE PARTS YOU'RE FOCUSING ON AREN'T BAD, BUT YOUR STORY DOESN'T QUITE COVER THE IMPORTANT BITS.
YOU'RE, LIKE, DEPRESSINGLY STUPID, HUH?
D-DON'T BLAME ME!
I NEVER HAD SPIRIT SIGHT IN THE FIRST PLACE!
YOU... WHAT?

IT'S WEIRD, BUT THAT DOES MAKE SENSE.
I CAN TELL YOU'RE TOUGH SPIRITUALLY-SPEAKING JUST BY LOOKING.
ON THE OTHER HAND, THE WAY YOU HANDLE YOUR SPIRIT ENERGY IS WAY TOO SLOPPY.
YOU'RE UNBALANCED.
LIKE SOMEONE FORCED YOU INTO SHACKLES.
YOUR POWER AND YOUR GEARS ARE ALL MISMATCHED.
INSTEAD OF INEXPERIENCE, IT FEELS ALMOST LIKE YOU'RE JUST BUILT UNIQUELY.
THAT TSUCHIMIKADO BLOOD OF YOURS MAY HAVE MANIFESTED IN A BAD WAY.
GRRRRRR...
~~~~~
RRRRRRR...
YEAH, YEAH. I KNOW I'M JUST A STRUGGLING D-STUDENT.
BUT JUST YOU WATCH. I'LL BE A PRO ONE DAY
OH, YOU WILL, WILL YOU?
SO? WHAT'RE YOU GONNA DO ONCE YOU BECOME A PRO?
HUH?
GONNA BECOME A CIVIL SERVANT DOWN AT THE AGENCY?
OR MAYBE YOU'RE GONNA TEACH BRATS LIKE THESE?
I HADN'T EVEN THOUGHT OF THAT.
I'D ONLY THOUGHT ABOUT SUPPORTING NATSUME...
I'LL TELL YOU RIGHT NOW...
~~~~~

ONCE YOU LEAVE THE ACADEMY, YOU KIDS'LL BE ALL OVER THE PLACE.
IN THE ONMYOJI WORLD, IT'S ALL ABOUT WHAT YOU CAN DO.
A STRAGGLER TAKES A WHOLE DIFFERENT ROUTE FROM HIS FRIENDS WITH ACTUAL TALENT.


GRR!
OH, OR DO YOU HAVE ANOTHER PLAN?
YOU GONNA SUCK UP TO THEM NOW WITH ALL THIS FRIENDSHIP STUFF AND RELY ON THEM TO GET AHEAD IN THE FUTURE?
YOU'RE SLIER THAN I GAVE YOU CREDIT FOR, HARUTORA.


YOU REALLY ARE A NASTY JERK.
PFFT!
AND YOU REALLY ARE DUMB!
IF I WANTED, I COULD CRUSH YOU WITHOUT BREAKING A SWEAT!
THUNK
BWAHA!
HAHA!
HAHA!

STOMP
STOMP
STOMP
THUNK
HEH HEH HEH...
YOU'RE THE FIRST PUNK TO EVER TALK TO ME LIKE THAT
BUT I'M NOT THE TYPE TO GO AROUND KICKIN' MUTTS FOR NOT KNOWING THEIR MANNERS.
IF SO, I'D BE KICKING DOGS ALL DAY
STOP
HEY, HARUTORA ...
IF YOU'RE GONNA BE A PRO, SET YOUR SIGHTS ON AN EXORCIST.
WHA ?!
ONCE YOU BECOME A GENUINE HUNTING DOG...
...I'LL KICK THE CRAP OUT OF YOU LIKE I ALWAYS WANTED.
THERE'S NO POINT AS LONG AS YOU'RE JUST A MUTT.

ON BOTTLE SALT

IF WE WAIT, WE'LL GET A CHANCE SOONER OR LATER.
IF A WILD CARD LIKE ME APPROACHES THESE BRATS...
...THE FOLKS SCHEMING BEHIND THE SCENES MIGHT REACT IN SOME WAY.
THIS IS A PRETTY EXCITING POSITION I'M IN.
BUT...

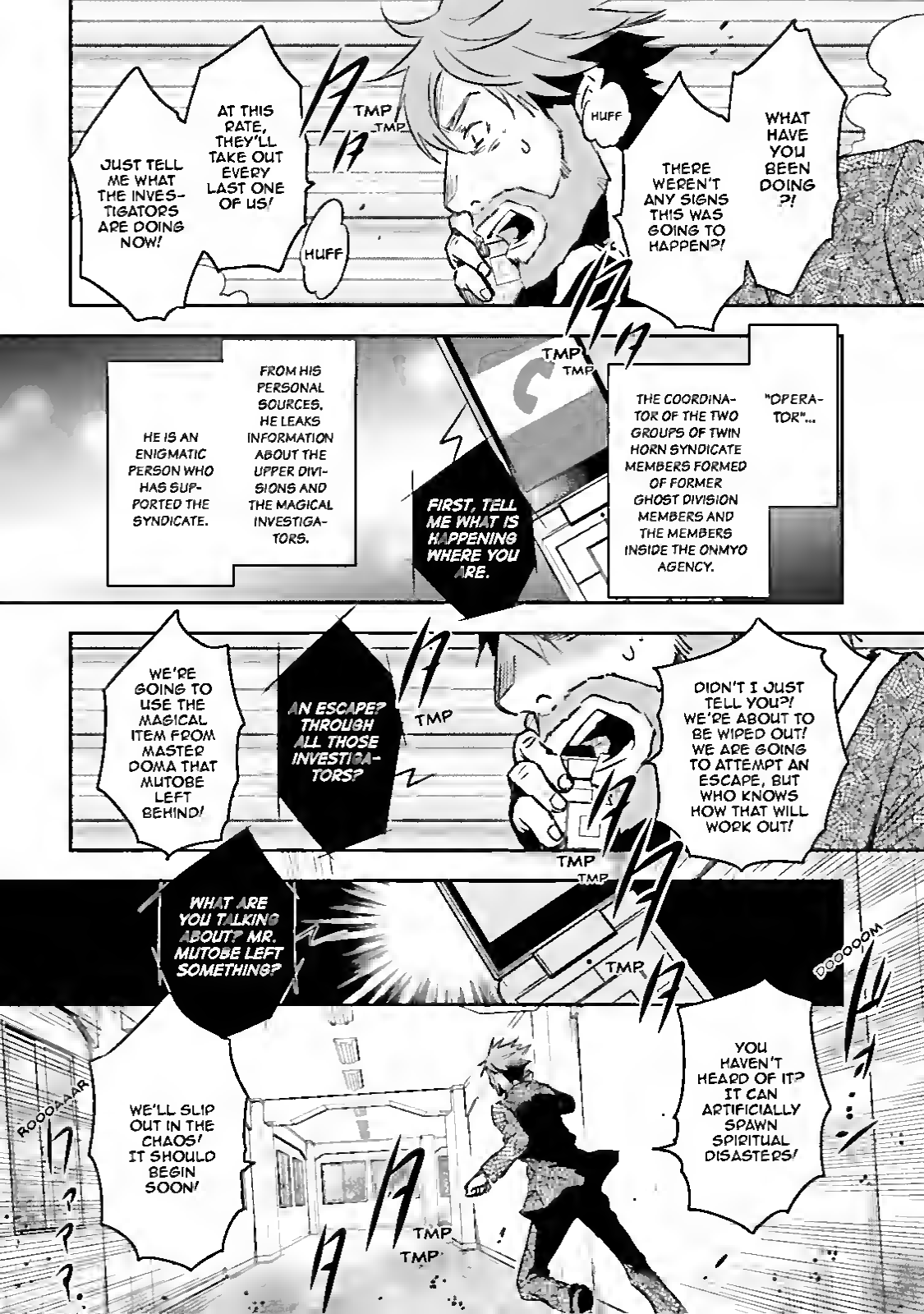
AFTER I VOLUNTEERED TO GUARD THESE KIDS, HE ACTUALLY RECOMMENDED ME FOR THE POSITION.
NOT THAT I REMEMBER DOING ANYTHING TO GET ON THE OLD MAN'S GOOD SIDE...
OLD MAN AMAMI KIND OF SURPRISED ME.
...OR DIDN'T OTHERWISE SURRENDER...
THE MEMBERS OF THE TWIN HORN SYNDICATE THAT SLIPPED THROUGH THE INVESTIGATION AT THE ONMYO AGENCY OFFICES AND MAGICAL INVESTIGATION DIVISION...
FWOOSH
DAMN IT! THE MAGICAL INVESTIGATION DIVISION HAS US COMPLETELY SURROUNDED!
EXORCISM BUREAU SHINJUKU BRANCH
THEN, A LARGE NUMBER OF MAGICAL INVESTIGATORS ARRIVED ALL AT ONCE.
AHHHHH!
AHHHHH!
BOOM!
NO, THEY WERE LURED HERE.
...SURREPTITIOUSLY GATHERED HERE WITH ME, THE TOP OF THEIR COMMAND STRUCTURE, AT THE SHINJUKU BRANCH.
WE SHOULD SEIZE THE BUILDING AND BARRICADE OURSELVES IN!
TWIN HORN SYNDICATE MEMBER EXORCIST YOSHITAKA MAKIHARA
IS THIS THE END?
WE PLAYED RIGHT INTO THEIR HANDS...

AFTER LEARNING OF OUR HEROIC DEEDS, THE KING OF THE NORTH STAR WILL SURELY AWAKEN!
HE'LL COME RUNNING TO SAVE US!
NOW IS THE TIME FOR US TO RAISE THE FLAG OF REBELLION AGAINST THE ONMYO AGENCY THAT HAS FOR TOO LONG IGNORED OUR KING!
THAT'S RIGHT!
NOW IS THE TIME!
EVEN NOW, WHAT IS...
...THIS ISOLATION I FEEL BETWEEN ME AND THEM?
A SMALL FORCE TRYING TO HOLD OUT AGAINST AN OVERWHELMINGLY LARGER FORCE
—IS DOING NOTHING MORE THAN HOPING FOR AN HONORABLE DEATH
IT LOOKS LIKE NO ONE HERE WISHES TO SURRENDER...
...BUT I BELIEVE THE CORRECT CHOICE FOR US IS NOT TO BARRICADE OURSELVES HERE, BUT TO TRY TO ESCAPE
BANG BANG
DUM DUM
WE SHOULD SLIP OUT INDIVIDUALLY, GO INTO HIDING, AND WAIT FOR OUR CHANCE TO--
DON'T BE STUPID!
YOU WANT US TO JUST RUN AWAY?!
HOW COULD WE EVER FACE THE KING OF THE NORTH STAR?!
IF THAT'S WHAT YOU THINK, YOU NEED TO GET OVER THE ARROGANCE IT TAKES...
...TO THINK THE KING IS GOING TO COME SAVE YOUR PITIFUL ASSES!

WHEN DID I BEGIN TALKING SO POMPOUSLY?
WHEN DID WE TURN INTO THIS SORT OF ORGANIZATION?
IF YOU TRULY DESIRE TO BE SERVANTS OF THE KING, THEN IS THE SHAME OF A TEMPORARY ESCAPE SO UNBEARABLE?
FOR NOW, WE MUST SIMPLY AWAIT OUR KING'S AWAKENING.
WHAT GOOD WILL BEING DEFEATED HERE ACHIEVING NOTHING DO US?!
ROAR
BANG
BANG
DON'T WORRY ABOUT THAT.
WE WILL RELEASE A NUMBER OF SPIRITUAL DISASTERS INSIDE THE SHINJUKU OFFICE...
..AND ESCAPE IN THE CHAOS.
THERE'S NO WAY WE CAN MAKE IT...
BUT EVEN IF WE WANTED TO ESCAPE, WE'RE ALREADY SURROUNDED.
!!
MURMUR
IT'S SOMETHING MUTOBE LEFT BEHIND
IT IS APPARENTLY A TOOL CREATED BY MASTER DOMA
ACTUALLY, THERE EXISTS A MAGICAL ITEM WHICH SIMPLIFIES THAT PROCESS.
LIKE DURING THE SECOND PURIFICATION?!
BUT WE DON'T HAVE TIME TO PREPARE THAT KIND OF--

BUT, FOR SAFETY, THIS TOOL WAS ENTRUSTED TO SOMEONE WHO ISN'T A MEMBER OF THE SYNDICATE
I WILL NOW GO TO HIM TO REQUEST ITS ACTIVATION.
UNTIL THE SPIRITUAL DISASTERS CAN BE SPAWNED, BARRICADE THE BUILDING AND FIGHT BACK.
BUT ONLY AS A COVER.
WE WILL ESCAPE THE MAGICAL INVESTIGATORS AND PLOT OUR COMEBACK.
YOU HEAR ME?
THE PREPARATIONS ARE COMPLETE.
THAT SAID, IT EMPLOYS A TECHNIQUE I CAN'T UNDERSTAND.
I CAN'T GUARANTEE ANYTHING.
I AM WELL AWARE. PLUS...
...INSIDE THE BUILDING, AT LEAST THERE WON'T BE ANY CIVILIAN CASUALTIES.
I MEAN.. THE PLACE IS FILLED TO THE BRIM WITH SKILLED EXORCISTS.

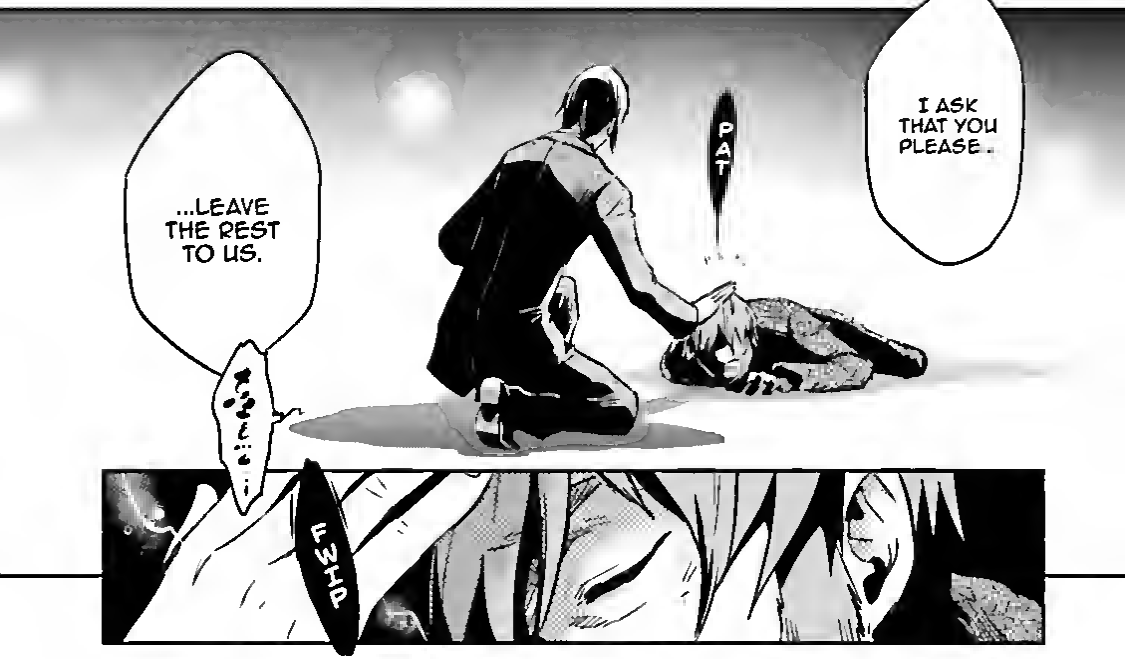
HE ALWAYS WAS AN UNSOCIABLE FELLOW.
HEH.
.....
GAZZ
THE DAYS HE, I, AND MUTOBE USED TO HANG OUT AND DISCUSS OUR FUTURES ARE...
...ODDLY NOSTALGIC.
BA-DOOM
!!
!!
BANG
EVERYONE, MAKE YOUR ESCAPE!
IS IT OVER?
SCAT-TER!
ROOAAR
ROOAAR
EXORCIST MAKIHARA! THEY GOT THROUGH THE BARRI-CADE!
BANG
BEEP
OPERATOR HERE.
TMCH
VZZZZT...
TMCH
TMP
TMP
TMP
TMP
TMP
BANG
TMCH
DOOOM
TMP


JUST TELL ME WHAT THE INVESTIGATORS ARE DOING NOW!
AT THIS RATE, THEY'LL TAKE OUT EVERY LAST ONE OF US!
HUFF
TMP
TMP
HUFF
THERE WEREN'T ANY SIGNS THIS WAS GOING TO HAPPEN?!
WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN DOING?!
TMP
TMP
FIRST, TELL ME WHAT IS HAPPENING WHERE YOU ARE.
HE IS AN ENIGMATIC PERSON WHO HAS SUPPORTED THE SYNDICATE.
FROM HIS PERSONAL SOURCES, HE LEAKS INFORMATION ABOUT THE UPPER DIVISIONS AND THE MAGICAL INVESTIGATORS.
THE COORDINATOR OF THE TWO GROUPS OF TWIN HORN SYNDICATE MEMBERS FORMED OF FORMER GHOST DIVISION MEMBERS AND THE MEMBERS INSIDE THE ONMYO AGENCY.
"OPERATOR"...
WE'RE GOING TO USE THE MAGICAL ITEM FROM MASTER DOMA THAT MUTOBE LEFT BEHIND!
AN ESCAPE? THROUGH ALL THOSE INVESTIGATORS?
TMP
TMP
TMP
DIDN'T I JUST TELL YOU?! WE'RE ABOUT TO BE WIPED OUT! WE ARE GOING TO ATTEMPT AN ESCAPE, BUT WHO KNOWS HOW THAT WILL WORK OUT!
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? MR. MUTOBE LEFT SOMETHING?
TMP
DOOOOOM
ROOOAAR
WE'LL SLIP OUT IN THE CHAOS! IT SHOULD BEGIN SOON!
TMP
TMP
YOU HAVEN'T HEARD OF IT? IT CAN ARTIFICIALLY SPAWN SPIRITUAL DISASTERS!

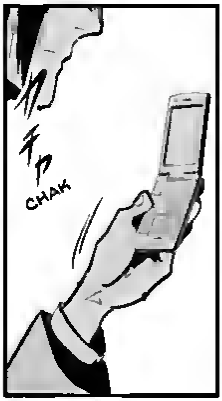
THIS SHOULD ENABLE AT LEAST ONE OR TWO OF US TO--
TMP TMP
YEAH! THE MAGICAL INVESTIGATION DIVISION SHOULDN'T EVEN KNOW THIS ITEM EXISTS!
...WHICH MEANS, IT IS TOO LATE TO STOP IT NOW, RIGHT?
TMP TMP
GOOD.
WHAT?
TMP TMP
FWIP
DOOO
DOOO BANG

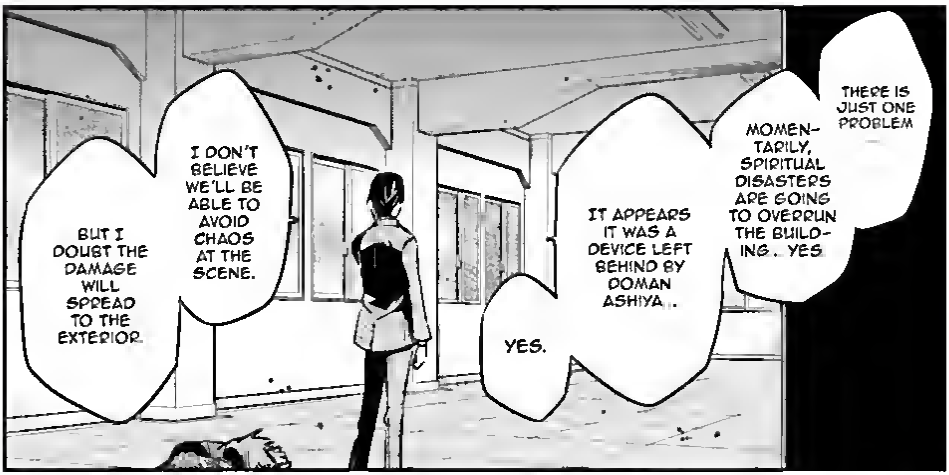
?
I'M SORRY, MR. MAKIHARA.
THUD
I WAS RIGHT TO COME TO ELIMINATE YOU PERSONALLY.
TO IMAGINE MR. MUTOBE LEFT BEHIND A BACKUP PLAN LIKE THIS.
.....
YOUR BELIEF IN YAKO WAS DIFFERENT FROM THE OTHERS.
I COULD TRULY SYMPATHIZE WITH IT.
BUT...

IT PAINS ME TO SAY SO, BUT THE "CURRENT" TWIN HORN SYNDICATE HAS ALREADY COMPLETED ITS DUTY.
ROOOAAAR
BANG BANG
WE WOULDN'T WANT YOU FALLING INTO THE INVESTI-GATORS' HANDS.
IT WOULD BE VERY INCONVENIENT FOR YOU TO MAKE IT OUT OF HERE WITHOUT KNOWING THE "TRUTH."
DUM DA DUM

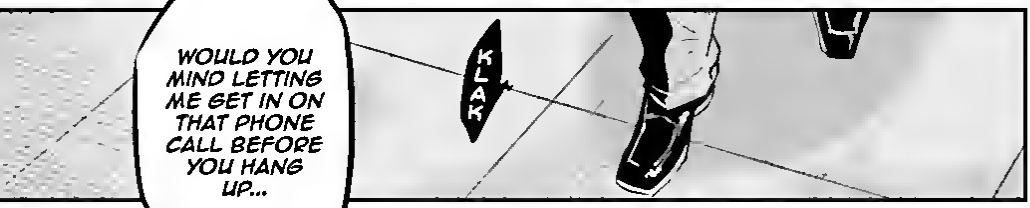

I ASK THAT YOU PLEASE.
PAT
...LEAVE THE REST TO US.
FWHP

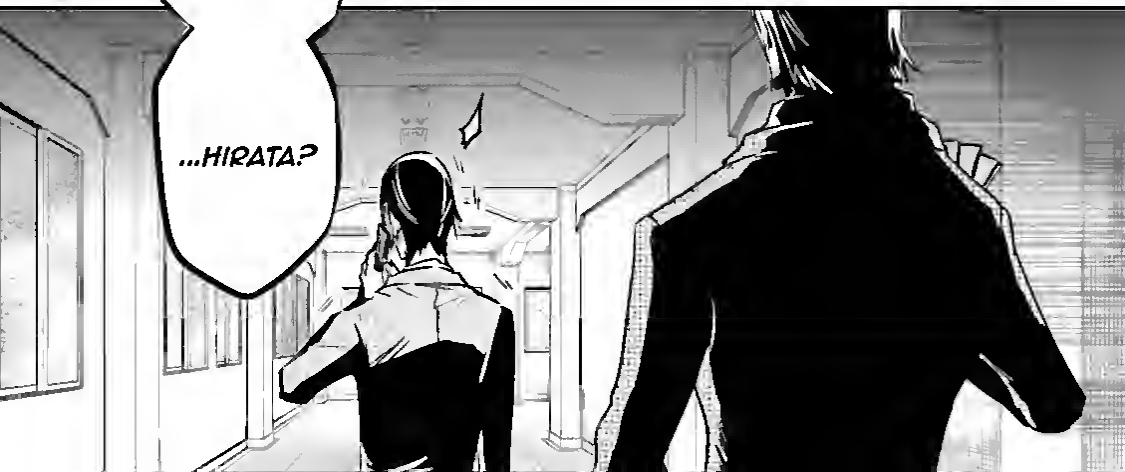
...IT'S ME.
I'M FINISHED HERE.


CHAK


THERE IS JUST ONE PROBLEM
MOMENTARILY, SPIRITUAL DISASTERS ARE GOING TO OVERRUN THE BUILDING. YES.
IT APPEARS IT WAS A DEVICE LEFT BEHIND BY DOMAN ASHIYA.
YES.
I DON'T BELIEVE WE'LL BE ABLE TO AVOID CHAOS AT THE SCENE.
BUT I DOUBT THE DAMAGE WILL SPREAD TO THE EXTERIOR.

ANYWAY, WITH THIS, THE INTERNAL MEMBERS OF THE TWIN HORN SYNDICATE HAVE BEEN ELIMINATED.
SO KAGAMI IS—
YES.
I CAN'T STAND THAT THAT MAN IS AT HIS SIDE.


KAK
KLK
WOULD YOU MIND LETTING ME GET IN ON THAT PHONE CALL BEFORE YOU HANG UP...


...HIRATA?

CHAK
FWIP
SO SOMEONE DID NOTICE...
HOW LONG HAVE YOU KNOWN?
SORRY, HIRATA.
KLAK

THE ONLY ONE WHO'S GONNA BE ASKING ANY QUESTIONS HERE...
...IS ME.
END OF CHAPTER 57

THE ONLY ONE WHO'S GONNA BE ASKING ANY QUESTIONS HERE...

END OF CHAPTER 57

TOKYO RAVENS

THE GLORY OF HIS WOUND?

The color white's reflector effect in action?
In fact, now that I've got white hair, I almost look younger. Could it be, you know, that?
MIRROR

AFTERWORD

HELLO! IT'S ME, SUZUMI.

WE'RE ALREADY UP TO THE 11TH VOLUME OF RAVENS! THANK YOU SO MUCH! WE'RE ENTERING THE 7TH VOLUME OF THE ORIGINAL NOVELS, AND THE STORY'S GOING TO GET MORE AND MORE SERIOUS FROM HERE ON OUT. I WOULD LIKE TO TAKE A STEP BACK TO PSYCH MYSELF UP AGAIN, AND GET BACK TO WORK... I BET I'LL WANT TO DRAW SOME GAG COMIC CHAPTERS (LOL) BUT I JUST HOPE I CAN RECREATE THE SPIRIT OF THE ORIGINAL NOVELS... I'LL DO MY BEST! I HOPE YOU'LL CHECK OUT THE NEXT VOLUME AS WELL!! MR. AZUNO, MY EDITOR K, MY ASSISTANTS, I LOOK FORWARD TO CONTINUING TO WORK WITH YOU!

3/2015, ATSUSHI SUZUMI

STAFF & HELP

INAGI KAZAMORI + K.K. + KODAMA + HANA HIRATOKI

TOKYO RAVENS
Volume 11

KADOKAWA MANGA

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